

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

CS HB 31 (FIN) –Sexual Assault Examination Kits, Training and Reporting Sponsor Statement

Alaska's sexual crime rates are three times higher than the national average, and child sexual assault rates are six times the national average. According to the FBI Uniform Crime Report, 59 percent of Alaska women report having experienced sexual violence.

To support victims of sexual assault, House Bill 31 does three things:

- Requires an annual audit of untested sexual assault kits, so that victims' evidence does not continue to be left on a shelf, and so that law enforcement can prioritize efforts to address the full scope of the backlog;
- Puts in statute a victim-centered approach to report sexual assault;
- Requires 12 hours of sexual assault training at Alaska police academies.

Background:

Last year legislation was passed to require local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to report their untested sexual assault kits to the Alaska Department of Public Safety. That report, which would become an annual report under CS HB 31 (FIN), showed that 49 Alaska law enforcement agencies have 3,484 untested sexual assault kits. Of these, 3,219, or approximately 92%, were in the possession of the seven largest agencies in the state. Anchorage had more than 53% of the untested kits.

We know that when tested, DNA evidence obtained through testing sexual assault kits can be an incredibly powerful tool to solve and prevent crime. DNA evidence was used to charge a serial rapist for a series of attacks in 2014 that also led to linking the perpetrator to crimes as far back as 2001. It is time to put public safety for Alaska women and families to the forefront. I urge your support for CS HB 31 (FIN).