



Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii

Re: HB 31 (Sexual Assault Examination Kits)

April 4th, 2018

Dear Senators:

On behalf of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest & Hawaii (PPVNH), I am writing to express our strong support of HB 31. This bill will have a direct positive impact for survivors of sexual assault in our state who are waiting for closure and justice.

Alaska's sexual assault rates are tragically high. It is crucial that all sexual assault examination kits are collected, submitted, and tested in a timely manner, with the victim's consent. Leaving thousands of sexual assault examination kits untested not only allows sexual predators to evade justice and re-offend, but also leaves thousands of sexual assault survivors without closure.

We are grateful for the work lawmakers have already done to address our state's kit backlog. States and cities that have taken steps to address the backlog in their forensics facilities are seeing significant gains for their efforts. Of the tens of thousands of old kits finally being analyzed throughout the country, cities and states have been identifying perpetrators in the national DNA database and are steadily making gains in indicting and prosecuting those individuals.

Our state has already taken important steps, but there is more work to be done. We support the goals of HB 31, including using a patient-centered approach, requiring an annual audit to ensure that our state continues to prioritize timely collection and testing of sexual assault kits. We also support increased training to provide additional tools for law enforcement, who play a critical role in our state's response to our sexual assault epidemic.

Our state has a duty to keep our communities safe and ensure that every sexual assault survivor finds closure or justice. PPVNH supports Representative Tarr and her leadership on this issue. We urge you to consider the effects this legislation will have on sexual assault survivors and to support HB 31.

Thank you,

Alyson Currey, MSW

Legislative Liaison

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest & Hawaii