



February 27, 2020

The Honorable Neal Foster  
Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol Room 505  
120 4th Street  
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Jennifer Johnston  
Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol Room 511  
120 4th Street  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Co-Chairs Foster and Johnston:

I write in support of H.B. 182, which would establish procedures to ensure that every sexual assault kit in Alaska is tested expeditiously to ensure that perpetrators can be brought to justice.

We are grateful for the efforts that Alaska has undertaken to reduce its sexual assault kit backlog. In 2019, Alaska passed H.B. 49 which required an annual audit of untested sexual assault kits. As a result, the Department of Public Safety identified a total of 1,696 untested kits.<sup>1</sup> Alaska understands that each kit represents a victim who deserves justice. That is why Rep. Geran Tarr's bill, H.B. 182, presents another step forward to ensure that the testing of vital forensic evidence from sexual assault cases remains a priority for Alaska's criminal justice system.

This bill reduces the turnaround time for sexual assault kit testing from one year to six months after a laboratory receives a kit from a law enforcement agency. This is a small, but important change to ensure that testing is done more promptly. It also reinforces accountability in Alaska's criminal justice system and demonstrates to victims that their case will be taken seriously.

RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. Founded in 1994, RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE and [rainn.org](http://rainn.org)) and operates the Department of Defense Safe Helpline, a service for members of the U.S. military affected by sexual assault. RAINN also carries out programs to support victims, educate the public, improve public policy, and help companies and organizations improve the way they prevent and respond to sexual violence.

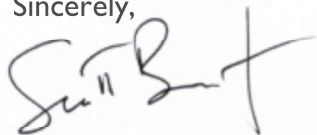
This bill is essential to support the work of law enforcement; it will mandate prompt testing of evidence that will identify and hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable, supporting victims'

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<sup>1</sup> Alaska Department of Public Safety, Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. "Statewide Inventory of Untested Sexual Assault Kits." Available at: <https://dps.alaska.gov/Comm/SAK/Statewide-Inventory>

pursuit of justice. Thank you for your continued leadership and for supporting victims of sexual violence in your state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Berkowitz". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott Berkowitz  
President

CC: Honorable Geran Tarr  
Honorable Dan Ortiz  
Honorable Andy Josephson  
Honorable Garv Knopp  
Honorable Bart LeBon  
Honorable Adam Wool  
Honorable Cathy Tilton  
Honorable Kelly Merrick  
Honorable Colleen Sullivan- Leonard  
Honorable Ben Carpenter