

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 12, 2024

3:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Matt Claman, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Kelly Merrick

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 131

"An Act requiring education in the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders."

- MOVED SB 131 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 193

"An Act relating to sexual assault examination kits; establishing the sexual assault examination kit tracking system; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 131

SHORT TITLE: ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER PROGRAM

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GRAY-JACKSON

04/21/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/21/23	(S)	STA
02/08/24	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/08/24	(S)	Heard & Held
02/08/24	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/12/24	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 193

SHORT TITLE: SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION KITS/TRACKING

SPONSOR(s) : RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/18/24 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/24 (S) STA, FIN
03/12/24 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR ELVI GRAY-JACKSON, District G
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 131.

GLADYS ANDERSEN, representing self

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

SHAYNE NUESCA, representing self

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

DAVID KANARIS, Forensic Science Laboratory Chief
Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory (AKSCDL)
Department of Public Safety (DPS)

POSITION STATEMENT: Invited testimony for SB 193.

TARA HENRY, representing self

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified with concerns about SB 193.

LAUREE MORTON, Executive Director
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 193.

JAMES COCKRELL, Commissioner
Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 193.

ACTION NARRATIVE

3:32:40 PM

CHAIR SCOTT KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Claman, Bjorkman, and Chair Kawasaki. Senator Wielechowski arrived thereafter.

SB 131-ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER PROGRAM

[3:33:39 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 131 "An Act requiring education in the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders."

[3:33:54 PM](#)

SENATOR ELVI GRAY-JACKSON, District G, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor for SB 131. She said SB 131 would include the history of Asian American Pacific Islanders and their contributions to K-12 schools.

[3:34:31 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 131.

[3:35:01 PM](#)

GLADYS ANDERSEN, representing self, testified in support of SB 131. She stated that as a member of the Filipino community in Juneau, she appreciates its organization and the backbone it provides for a close-knit community, enabling people to connect both locally and elsewhere. She expressed her belief that teaching Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history and culture is important, given the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Alaska. She recalled discovering the book "Filipinos in Alaska, 1788 to 1958" through her involvement in the Filipino community. Including AAPI history in the curriculum would help children and future learners broaden their understanding and enhance the history of the diverse cultures and accounts of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the state, thereby increasing the visibility of these communities in Alaska.

[3:35:55 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI joined the meeting.

[3:36:43 PM](#)

SHAYNE NUESCA, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said she serves as the Interim Director of Make Us Visible Alaska, a coalition working to bring AAPI history education to Alaska K-12 schools. She expressed that the bill is deeply personal to her, recounting her experience of emigrating to the U.S. from the Philippines with her family at the age of six. She shared that although they could bring few belongings, she brought a set of encyclopedias, which she flipped through as a child, searching for references to the Philippines and Filipinos. She reflected on her work

documenting the history of Filipinos in Alaska and connecting with students who have also migrated to this country. The ability to see oneself represented in education and media has a profound impact. Asian American and Pacific Islanders are the fastest-growing populations in Alaska. SB 131 is not just about teaching history but also about validating the experiences of students who deserve to feel seen. She shared her desire for her children and all children to be empowered by the stories of Asian American and Pacific Islanders who have made significant contributions to the state and country. She said that SB 131 is a matter of public safety and recounted a personal experience of being intimidated by classmates for her identity. She expressed hope that future generations will not experience such discrimination and urged the committee to pass SB 131 with haste, ensuring that future generations have the representation they need to feel a sense of belonging and pride in their heritage.

[3:39:24 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 131.

[3:39:30 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited a motion.

[3:39:32 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN moved to report SB 131, work order 33-LS0769\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:39:50 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and SB 131 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:40:04 PM](#)

At ease

SB 193-SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION KITS/TRACKING

[3:42:02 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 193 "An Act relating to sexual assault examination kits; establishing the sexual assault examination kit tracking system; and providing for an effective date."

[3:42:16 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced invited testimony for SB 193.

[3:42:48 PM](#)

DAVID KANARIS, Forensic Science Laboratory Chief, Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory (AKSCDL), Department of Public Safety (DPS), Anchorage, Alaska, said SB 193 mandates that all criminal justice system stakeholders participate in the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System provided by DPS. SB 193 establishes timeframes for all criminal justice system stakeholders, aligning with existing timeframes for law enforcement and the crime lab to examine the kits. The bill would eliminate the need for law enforcement agencies to proactively report on any untested kits in their possession, as this will be managed through the kit tracking system. SB 193 would provide victims with a means to track the progress of their kits through the criminal justice system.

[3:43:53 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS moved to slide 2 and explained the intent of SB 193:

[Original punctuation provided.]

What does the bill do?

- Requires healthcare providers to notify law enforcement within seven days that a sexual assault examination kit is complete and ready to be sent to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) crime lab
- Mandates the use of the sexual assault examination kit tracking system for law enforcement, medical providers, and the DPS crime lab
- Provides victims access to the sexual assault kit tracking system and to opt in or out of automated notifications

MR. KANARIS said SB 193 requires healthcare providers to notify law enforcement within seven days that a sexual assault examination kit is ready for pickup, addressing a gap in current legislation. While existing laws specify that law enforcement must send the kit to the lab within 30 days and the crime lab must test the kit within six months, they do not establish a timeframe for medical providers to inform law enforcement that the kit is ready.

[3:44:59 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS moved to slide 3 and described how SB 193 would help victims:

[Original punctuation provided.]

How can this bill help victims?

- Provides victims with an online portal to track the location and status of their kit from initial submission to final testing
- Provides victims the option to receive text or email notifications on the status of the kit in a trauma informed way
- Provides areas within the portal for contact information, resource information, and a list of frequently asked questions about the portal

MR. KANARIS noted that during the development of the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System, AKSCDL met with victim advocates and survivors' groups. He said that one resounding piece of feedback was the importance of understanding how traumatic the process can be for victims after experiencing assaults. Many victims are already traumatized and find it difficult to reengage with law enforcement to check the status of their kits, which can reopen their trauma. The benefit of the new system is that it allows victims to track the progress of their kits themselves. They can either proactively follow along or receive email and text notifications when their kit moves to the lab or when testing is completed. The system also includes built-in resources tailored to different regions, helping victims find local advocacy and support groups. He also mentioned plans to customize the system in the future to provide full translations into all major languages.

[3:46:44 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS moved to slide 3 and explained why SB 193 is necessary:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Why is this bill needed?

- Increases transparency of sexual assault examination kit testing for victims throughout the process

- Requires specific timeliness for the transmission and testing of sexual assault examination kits for all stakeholders
- Repeals duplicative work in tracking and inventorying untested sexual assault examination kits as this will be done through the sexual assault examination kit tracking system

MR. KANARIS emphasized the importance of having data to make informed decisions. He said that the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System has opened up the ability to monitor the progress of kits at various stages, such as how long medical providers, law enforcement, and the lab are taking. This data allows for a better understanding of these parameters and facilitates policy decisions to ensure timeliness among all stakeholders. The system helps prevent kits from sitting untested for extended periods and eliminates the need for duplicative work, such as asking law enforcement agencies to report untested kits, as they can proactively check the system themselves.

[3:47:47 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked for more information about InVita Healthcare Technologies, specifically regarding its Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System.

[3:48:10 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS explained that the system is already established and was funded using federal grant funds. He noted that there are several off-the-shelf software systems available for this type of work. Through a competitive bid process, a manufacturer and software company were selected, and the funds cover ongoing maintenance fees for the system.

[3:48:40 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked for more details about access to the technology, including its accessibility for different users such as patients, law enforcement, and others who may be involved. He inquired about the system's security measures, whether it is password protected, and how it ensures data security. He mentioned concerns about security protocols, especially in light of the recent breach of around seven million users' personal information through 23andMe.

[3:49:24 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that when a kit is collected from a victim or survivor, they are given a code that allows them to track their kit. Victims can share this code with advocates, who can

then access the information. The system does not include any personal identifying information; it only uses the code to provide updates on the kit's status. The system notifies users when testing is completed or when the kit is submitted to the lab, but does not include the results of the testing.

[3:50:00 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked whether law enforcement and courts could identify individuals based on the unique identifier used in the system, and who would have access to that identifier.

[3:50:20 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that the lab testing process involves testing the kit, issuing a lab report with investigation details, and sending the report to law enforcement and potentially to prosecutorial agencies. This process is entirely separate from the kit tracking system. The kit tracking system only allows individuals, and potentially administrators, with the tracking number to follow the progress of their kit.

[3:50:59 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked whether the only location where testing is conducted is at the state crime lab.

[3:51:08 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that is correct.

[3:51:11 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked whether it would be permissible to use another lab for testing on behalf of AKSCDL, and if all testing is currently expected to be done exclusively at that lab.

[3:51:25 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that is correct. He said AKSCDL has no desire to outsource testing.

[3:51:40 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked what SB 193 would repeal.

[3:51:45 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that the annual Sexual Assault Kit Inventory report traditionally involves soliciting information from participating law enforcement agencies about the number of untested kits they hold. This process helps address issues such as kits not being submitted to the lab. However, with the new kit tracking system in place, there will be no need for this manual reporting, as the system will allow direct access to view

how many kits are currently with law enforcement but have not yet been submitted to the lab.

[3:52:30 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked about the impact of the new system on backlog management. He was informed that the system allows for a daily view of tested and untested kits. He wondered whether the requirement to test certain kits within six months aims to prevent a backlog, ensuring that kits are processed in a timely manner.

[3:52:50 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that the six-month turnaround time has been in statute for a while and was designed to prevent future backlogs. The requirement does not eliminate the need for the inventory report but removes the necessity for law enforcement to manually provide that information. The report will still be conducted, but the new system will streamline data collection.

[3:53:19 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if InVita Healthcare Technologies sells data to any other agencies or groups.

[3:53:35 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that the organization was vetted by the IT department through DPS, which confirmed that no data sharing would occur. Additionally, the organization is an industry leader that works with many other labs and states, and, to the best of their knowledge, there is no data sharing involved. A definitive answer can be provided if needed.

[3:54:06 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked for clarification on where the tests are performed.

[3:54:17 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that all tests are performed at the crime lab in Anchorage.

[3:54:26 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if there would be any objections to clarifying that the testing will be conducted exclusively at an in-state lab given the amount of funding already granted.

[3:54:46 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS responded that the only potential need for outsourcing he could foresee would be in response to staff

shortages or if technological advancements surpassed the lab's capabilities. For example, if a new DNA technique became available that the in-state lab could not immediately implement, it might take a year or 18 months to set up and validate new services. In such cases, discussions with department leadership would determine whether outsourcing is necessary. However, the intent is to avoid outsourcing kits whenever possible.

[3:55:42 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked about the implications of adding an amendment to prioritize keeping testing within Alaska. He explained that if the legislature decided to ensure all testing remains in Alaska, an amendment could stipulate that testing must be done either in the crime lab or not at all. This would prevent sending tests to other locations, such as Seattle, even if there were advancements in testing technology or circumstances that might suggest better testing options elsewhere. Under the current language, sending tests to Seattle or other locations would be permitted.

[3:56:25 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that he believes that is accurate.

[3:56:46 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI concluded invited testimony and opened public testimony on SB 193.

[3:57:15 PM](#)

TARA HENRY, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified with concerns on SB 193. She said that the proposed mandate requiring healthcare providers to notify law enforcement within seven days of collecting a sexual assault kit will have unintended negative consequences. She explained that this deadline was established without consulting Alaska's healthcare agencies, including forensic nurses. She highlighted the challenges faced by forensic nursing programs, such as the extensive documentation required and the high volume of patients, which make meeting the seven-day deadline difficult. The process involves several steps, including patient care, documentation, and quality assurance, which can take substantial time. Enforcing this deadline could lead to increased financial burdens for hospitals due to overtime costs, additional stress on forensic nursing staff, and potential staffing shortages. She also mentioned that there are no provisions in the legislation for funding to cover these costs. Furthermore, she pointed out that Alaska's forensic nursing programs have only recently begun using the tracking system and have not yet received preliminary data from the Crime

Lab for review. She argued that legislating a deadline without sufficient data or consultation could negatively impact the quality of care for sexual assault victims. She recommended tabling the seven-day deadline until the 2025 legislative session to allow time for data analysis from at least a year's time and discussions with forensic nursing programs to establish a more reasonable and attainable deadline that would not be detrimental to the healthcare services provided.

[4:01:37 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked if she could recommend a more reasonable timeline than the seven-day deadline.

[4:01:51 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied that, given the size of the forensic nursing program, it would likely take a minimum of 10 days, with a maximum of 14 days, to meet the deadline for releasing kits. She explained that if a nurse finishes a case and then takes several days off, they will not be able to finalize the packaging and documentation of the kit until they return, unless they are forced to work on their days off. She noted that a seven-day window might not be sufficient, and she estimated that a 10-day deadline would be more appropriate based on how long it takes to complete the required tasks.

[4:03:12 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked whether it would be acceptable to handle the timeline for releasing sexual assault kits through regulations rather than specifying it in statute. She suggested that having the Department of Public Safety work with providers to issue regulations could provide more flexibility. This approach would allow time for research to determine a reasonable deadline and would enable adjustments to the regulations if the initial timeline proved impractical. He expressed concern about the potential issues with the current legislative proposal and sought her perspective on whether this regulatory approach would be preferable.

[4:04:25 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied that it would be a more appropriate approach than what is currently written under SB 193. This would allow the Department of Public Safety to review data for a year, consult with key stakeholders, such as healthcare providers, and then determine a more appropriate timeline based on their findings.

[4:05:04 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked about page 1, line 6 of SB 193, which states that a sexual assault examination kit is used to gather evidence. He inquired whether the primary purpose of the sexual assault kit is indeed for gathering evidence or if it serves another purpose when used by a healthcare provider.

[4:05:32 PM](#)

MS. HENRY clarified that the sexual assault evidence collection kit is specifically designed to gather forensic samples related to the reported sexual assault. The kit is used to collect swabs from different areas of the body, based on the patient's reported history and the forensic nurse's assessment of where DNA is most likely to be found. The kit is focused solely on forensic sample collection and does not include items for other medical testing or needs.

[4:06:38 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI noted that a standard definition for a sexual assault examination kit is absent in the bill and if there is a standard kit provided by DPS or another organization.

[4:06:54 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied that AKSCDL provides standard evidence collection kits to all healthcare providers. In the new tracking system, the kit inventory is monitored based on usage levels. When the stock reaches a predefined threshold, the system automatically places an order with the crime lab. The crime lab then notifies the providers when the kits are ready for pickup, which typically occurs every two to three months, depending on storage capacity.

[4:08:04 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if she knows how many kits are used by health care providers to gather evidence in the state on an annual basis.

[4:08:17 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied that while she does not have statewide numbers for sexual assault kits, she can report that the Alaska Comprehensive Forensic Training Academy (ACFTA) program in Anchorage handles over 300 kits. She suggested that the state crime lab might be able to provide data on the total number of kits received statewide.

[4:08:52 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if over 300 kits are used annually.

[4:08:57 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied yes.

[4:09:09 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS stated that the state receives around 400 to 450 sexual assault kits per year. However, not every sexual assault case results in a kit; some cases involve evidence such as clothing or other items rather than direct samples from the victim. Overall, the state handles approximately 600 to 650 sexual assault cases requesting DNA analysis annually, with the number of sexual assault kits falling between 400 and 450.

[4:09:57 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that he worked in a hospital emergency room in the past and recalled having an established staffer on-call. He asked her to describe the typical timeframe of a work shift for a nurse.

[4:10:53 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied that it depends on the community and location. In Anchorage, nurses work three days per work, 12-hour shifts, which is typical. Staff on call supplement and must meet a certain number per month. Other programs in the state might have one nurse assigned to the forensic nursing program and might work 1-2 days per week. The vast majority in rural communities work full-time jobs elsewhere and take on-call shifts on top of their shifts. On days off, nurses take on any number of shifts and essentially work two jobs to provide service. Sometimes, forensic nurses are scarce, so victims might need to be flown into Anchorage for testing and care.

[4:13:33 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked if forensic nurses are mandated to remain beyond their normal work shift hours.

[4:13:51 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied no. Forensic nurses do not mandate staff to come in and work overtime. The only time would be in the middle of an examination at the time of their shift. These nurses are asked, but cannot be forced.

[4:14:57 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked if there are instances where nurses are required to work beyond their scheduled shift hours.

[4:15:05 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied no, not for forensic nursing services.

[4:15:19 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked if, in her experience, there are times when other types of nurses are mandated to come in for work.

[4:15:30 PM](#)

MS. HENRY replied that a national emergency might necessitate a work mandate. However, unless a nurse is on call, they cannot be required to come in on their day off.

[4:16:39 PM](#)

LAUREE MORTON, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, testified in support of SB 193. She emphasized the importance of allowing victims access to information about their rape kits and receiving automatic notifications of the kits' status. This represents a significant step forward in providing victim-centered responses throughout the criminal justice system. She recalled that Alaska adopted the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) model in the late 1990s, which coordinated efforts to minimize further trauma for victims, ensuring their rights and choices are prioritized during interviews and examinations. She highlighted past progress, such as prohibiting healthcare facilities from charging victims for rape exam kits, a law established in 2000. She noted that recent legislative actions addressed the backlog of unprocessed kits and mandated victim notification when kits were tested. SB 193 aims to implement a tracking system, allowing victims to follow the progress of their kits from collection through testing. She wondered whether the state is nearing the finish line in ensuring victims are treated with dignity and respect, can make informed choices about interacting with the system, and receive necessary support. She suggested including the right to know the testing date and location of their sexual examination kit in the crime victims' rights statute under AS 12.61.010 and ensuring victims are informed of this right by amending AS 18.65.865(c). However, she acknowledged that there is room for further advancement.

[4:20:03 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked her to repeat the specific sections she referenced that she believes require further amendments.

[4:20:10 PM](#)

MS. MORTON replied that she recommends amending AS 12.61.010, which currently outlines 15 crime victim's rights. She proposes adding a 16th right, ensuring that victims have access to information about their sexual assault exam kit. Additionally,

she suggested amending AS 18.65.865(c), which mandates that DPS create a notice distributed to all law enforcement agencies across the state. This notice, which peace officers must provide to victims of sexual assault or stalking, informs them of all their rights.

[4:21:10 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked if she could provide recommendations in writing.

[4:21:44 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 193.

[4:22:37 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS explained that this timeframe was established in collaboration with the statewide forensic nurse practitioner training coordinator, based on best practices recommended by the National Institute of Justice, which suggests a 24 to 48-hour turnaround. However, recognizing the unique challenges in Alaska, particularly in rural areas, a seven-day standard was agreed upon. He noted that their program coordinator for the Sexual Assault Kit tracking software and the statewide forensic nurse practitioner trainer conducted extensive training across the state, reaching over 700 participants in 145 sessions. The effort aimed to ensure compliance with the seven-day turnaround goal. He shared that, based on data from the first six months, the average turnaround time for processing 250 kits was 6.8 days, indicating most agencies are meeting the standard. However, he expressed concerns about some kits taking significantly longer, with instances of kits sitting for over 20, 30, or even 60 days. This variability prompted the establishment of a formal turnaround time. Among the 32 states with a sexual assault kit tracking system, 14 have mandated turnaround times for medical providers. The most common standard is 24 hours, with some states requiring as few as four hours, and only one state aligning with Alaska's seven-day timeframe.

[4:24:59 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked him to clarify the timeline to process kits from a medical provider to law enforcement.

[4:25:16 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS clarified that the seven-day timeframe refers to the period from when a medical provider notifies law enforcement that a kit is available for pickup, not the time taken to collect the kit itself. The process is divided into distinct phases: the medical provider's turnaround time starts when they

collect the kit and ends when they notify law enforcement. Law enforcement's turnaround time begins upon notification and ends when they submit the kit to the lab. The lab's turnaround time covers the period from when the kit is received in the lab until testing is complete.

[4:25:54 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the turnaround time of 6.8 days is a mean or a median number.

[4:26:01 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that it is the mean turnaround time. He stated his belief that the median turnaround time is two days.

[4:26:16 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN cited AS 44.41.065, which currently states that sexual assault kits must be sent to an accredited lab or AKSCDL within 30 days after collection. He asked whether SB 193 intends to reduce the 30-day timeframe of processing kits to seven days.

[4:26:49 PM](#)

MR. KANARIS replied that the seven-day requirement applies to the medical provider, while the 30-day timeframe applies to law enforcement. He clarified that the current statute does not impose specific time requirements for the medical provider, law enforcement, and AKSCDL.

[4:27:04 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked whether, from DPS' perspective, it would be preferable for the legislature to direct the department to write regulations that are reasonable and workable with medical providers, rather than putting the requirements into statute.

[4:27:31 PM](#)

JAMES COCKRELL, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety (DPS), Anchorage, Alaska, answered questions related to SB 193. He acknowledged the significant work done by nurses in investigating and collecting evidence, noting that law enforcement could not perform their duties without their dedication. He also highlighted the considerable progress made in recently clearing hundreds of old sexual assault kits from law enforcement locker rooms. He commended the state, the legislature, and the current administration for their efforts to stay proactive in addressing this sensitive issue. Regarding the question on regulations versus statutes, he stated that he does not have a strong preference but emphasized the importance of maintaining progress. He mentioned that similar processes are

underway in the House, and while he prefers statutory regulations, he is open to the Senate's direction on the matter.

[4:29:27 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 193 in committee.

[4:30:06 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m.