



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and Members of Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Lori Gramlich, and I proudly represent House District 131, the lovely seaside community of Old Orchard Beach. I write to you in support of **LD 2129, An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits in the Possession of Law Enforcement.**

Today you have an opportunity to create a statewide survivor-centered tool and collect essential data to move forward as a state. My colleagues and the experts in medical care, law enforcement and prosecution who will also provide testimony to address the specifics around sexual assault kits in specific, but I want to provide you with a framework from my personal and professional experience about why a survivor-centered practice is so important.

Getting a sexual assault forensic examination is an hours-long, intense process for any survivor. Similarly, choosing to report a sexual assault to law enforcement is an often stressful and challenging decision. Once a survivor reports a sexual assault to law enforcement, they are giving up another piece of decision making when so many choices have already been taken from them. Therefore, it is important as a state that we make sure survivors who have an exam completed and choose to report are treated with respect and consideration while they seek justice.

Creating a statewide tracking system is an important, survivor-centered tool. Currently, when a survivor gets a sexual assault forensic examination done, their only path for getting information about their case is direct contact from incredibly busy law enforcement officers, victim witness advocates, or prosecutors. This is an imperfect system. A sexual assault tracking system allows survivors 24/7 access and information about where their kit is in the process and general information about the process in general. This is a more convenient and trauma-informed way to share information with survivors who are managing so many other things.

Furthermore, we do not know how many kits are collected every year or what percentage of collected kits are tested. This bill requires an inventory of all kits currently in storage, which will allow us as a state to consider how to move forward with kits that were not tested.

In my own personal experience, I did not speak publicly about my own sexual abuse experiences in part because my first experiences with disclosing were met with a lack of support and belief. For some sexual assault survivors, their first time sharing their story is in a forensic examination. It is important that as a state we make that process as survivor-centered as possible. By creating a more transparent and accessible system, we are taking an important first step as a state.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope you will support LD 2129 and would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.