



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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January 29, 2024

Testimony of Representative Laurie Osher 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**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and esteemed members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, I am Laurie Osher and I represent District 25, the majority of Orono. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony 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.**

As you have heard, this legislation would create both a tracking system for forensic examination kits in the possession of law enforcement agencies in the state and complete an inventory of kits currently in the possession of law enforcement.

We know that there is a backlog of untested forensic examination kits in the country and Maine is no exception. As of 2018, the last time I am aware we have solid data, Maine faced a backlog of 530 untested kits. It is quite possible that number is higher now.

We must do everything we can to ensure that those who have committed these crimes are brought to account. This bill is the first step in helping to move that process forward.

In order to understand how we can achieve the goal of testing every kit in this state, we first must know what task entails. By conducting a statewide inventory, we will learn the exact scope of the problem and can formulate a plan to address it. Combined with an ongoing tracking system,

we will have the data available to ensure that a backlog such as the one we currently face does not occur in the future.

While there is much more we will need to do going forward including finding the funding to deal with the current backlog, this bill provides a meaningful first step and will empower us to make thoughtful decisions going forward. I urge the committee to support this vital piece of legislation.

Please vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2129.