



**Holly Stover**

71 Dover Rd.

Boothbay, ME 04537

Phone: (207) 633-5979

[Holly.Stover@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Holly.Stover@legislature.maine.gov)

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

May 12, 2025

*Testimony of Representative Holly B. Stover supporting*

## **LD 1816, An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary*

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Holly Stover, and I represent House District 48. I am here to express my strong and unwavering support for **LD 1816, An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits**.

This legislation represents a critical step forward in ensuring that survivors of sexual assault are treated with the dignity, respect, and justice they deserve. For too long, Maine, like many other states, has lacked a uniform and transparent system for tracking sexual assault forensic examination kits. As a result, some kits have gone untested, some have been misplaced, and others have remained in storage for years, leaving survivors uncertain and undermining the integrity of our justice system.

This bill offers a solution grounded in accountability and progress. It builds on important foundational work already underway through federal grant funding, which has enabled the development of a tracking system. However, that funding will expire in June 2025. Without immediate legislative action, this promising work could come to a halt. This bill ensures continuity in the development of the system and, more importantly, establishes a comprehensive, permanent, statewide framework to track every forensic examination kit from collection to resolution.

The impact of such a system cannot be overstated. Survivors will gain access to the status of their kits through a secure, anonymous portal, offering a sense of control during what is often a

disempowering and traumatic experience. Hospitals, law enforcement agencies, crime laboratories, and prosecutors will be able to coordinate efforts using a shared platform, ensuring that no kit is forgotten or mishandled. This will foster a culture of accountability and adherence to clear standards and timelines.

Beyond individual outcomes, this legislation will strengthen public safety. When kits are processed efficiently and reliably, evidence can identify serial offenders, resolve cold cases, and exonerate the wrongfully accused. Delays in processing and breakdowns in tracking not only deny justice to survivors but also leave communities vulnerable to repeat offenders. Maine should be at the forefront of closing these gaps.

Additionally, the bill's requirement to conduct a complete statewide inventory of all kits currently in law enforcement possession is a long overdue measure. We cannot address issues that we have not fully measured. A county-by-county accounting of untested kits will equip lawmakers, stakeholders, and the public with the necessary insight to allocate resources effectively and reduce any existing backlog.

The provision requiring a 20-year storage period for completed kits, regardless of whether a survivor chooses to report immediately, reflects a thoughtful understanding of the complex and often delayed process that many survivors face. It ensures that critical evidence is preserved until they are ready to engage with the justice system.

Ultimately, this bill is about restoring trust in our institutions, in our processes, and in our collective commitment to survivors of sexual violence. It recognizes that justice delayed is justice denied, and it offers a path forward rooted in compassion, transparency, and public responsibility.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass the bill without delay. Survivors have waited long enough for a system that treats their evidence with the seriousness it deserves. With this legislation, Maine can lead with purpose and integrity.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to justice for victims of violence and public safety.