

MD to Crack Rape Kit Backlog with New Law, Funds

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 01/10/2020

ANNAPOLIS, Md. – January 10, 2020 - Millions of dollars are set to help police departments in Maryland process thousands of rape kits that have sat untested in storage, and to help keep pace with new cases.

The funding is part of a [new state law](#) that went into effect Jan. 1, 2020, requiring police to submit most rape kits for forensic testing within 30 days unless the victim opposes testing.

Lisae Jordan, executive director of the [Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault](#), says the state has a backlog of more than 6,000 untested rape kits going back decades.

"The new law was needed because Maryland repeatedly and consistently failed to test rape kits," she states. "It's disrespectful to survivors and it's something that we needed to fix."

Jordan says Maryland is providing \$3.5 million in a new state fund for testing over the next five years to finally give justice to sexual assault survivors.

Maryland joins a growing number of states tackling huge backlogs of untested rape kits, with the total estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands.

Connecticut, Florida and New York also recently passed new laws requiring police departments to submit rape kits to labs for testing within certain time frames.

Jordan says the number of untested kits are an indication of bigger issues with investigating and prosecuting sexual assaults, including not believing victims and discouraging them from coming forward.

"Testing rape kits is only part of the larger problem," she stresses. "We need to make sure that law enforcement has the training, that prosecutors have the resources and, moreover, that our leaders really have the commitment to take rape seriously and to end sexual violence."

As of October, according to the Joyful Heart Foundation, the testing of backlogged rape kits has identified more than 1,300 suspected serial rapists who committed crimes across 40 states.

-Diane Bernard, Public News Service - MD

Copyright © 2020 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.