



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CWA of South Dakota Commends Elimination of Rape Kit Backlog

Concerned Women for America (CWA) of South Dakota commends state Attorney General Marty Jackley and the staff of the South Dakota Forensic Lab for the rapid response to complete the testing of the backlog of rape kits that had been stored by law enforcement for lengthy periods of time. This is a national issue of concern, so we are pleased to see South Dakota take the lead in clearing the backlog so that victims receive judicious treatment as their cases move forward.

The South Dakota Attorney General announced in a press release on January 9 that the testing of over 500 rape kits from law enforcement agencies in South Dakota had been completed. CWA of South Dakota supported the legislation during the 2016 South Dakota legislative session that required completion of rape kit testing within 90 days of receipt by the Division of Criminal Investigation or the Forensic Laboratory.

CWA of South Dakota's Legislative Liaison testified to the following before the House Judiciary Committee, "Just one example of the scenario that HB 1132 will help to alleviate is the case of Debbie Smith. For six years, Debbie waited in emotional turmoil for Norman Jimmerson, the thug who dragged her out of her kitchen and raped her in the woods behind her home, to be found and convicted. Shortly after Debbie's rape, Jimmerson also abducted and robbed two more women. Because Debbie was brave enough to undergo a forensic exam, only God knows how many women she saved from being victimized by her rapist ... Let us move forward in doing all that we can to become a safer state for women."

State Director Linda Schauer had this to say concerning Jackley's announcement, "It has been estimated that 400,000 rape kits were sitting untested in labs and on police storage shelves across the nation. Thanks to Attorney General Jackley, there are now 300,500 untested and South Dakota is no longer counted in that number. As the judicial process continues we are pleased that sexual assault criminals will be brought out of the shadows and that victims will know that perpetrators will be removed from the streets, making them unable to strike again."

Concerned Women for America is the nation's largest public policy women's organization.

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Concerned Women for America of South Dakota

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