



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

The Honorable José Serrano,
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

As the Committee begins writing the Fiscal Year 2021 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we thank you for your past support for the Department of Justice's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative. We respectfully request that for FY2021 the Committee fund this program at no less than the House-passed FY2020 level of \$49 million.

Hundreds of thousands of rape kits sit untested in police department and crime lab storage facilities across the country in what is known as the rape kit backlog. Each kit represents a lost opportunity to bring healing and justice to a survivor of sexual violence and safety to a community. Developed and launched in 2015, the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), provides funding through a competitive grant program to support the comprehensive reform of law enforcement's approaches to sexual assault cases resulting from evidence found in rape and sexual assault kits that have never been submitted to a crime laboratory.

The Sexual Assault Kit Initiative aims to complement other proven federal programming that targets the rape kit backlog and the creation of a coordinated community response that ensures just resolution to these cases whenever possible through a victim-centered approach. The Initiative also builds law enforcement's capacity to prevent the development of conditions that lead to high numbers of unsubmitted sexual assault kits and backlogs in the future. Further investment is critical to eliminating the rape kit backlog that plagues law enforcement and sexual assault victims nationwide.

In FY2018, the House passed a funding level of \$49 million, but ultimately \$47.5 million was appropriated. In FY2019, funding increased again to \$48 million. This letter seeks FY2021 funding of no less than the House-passed FY2020 level of \$49 million.

Sincerely,



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, FY21

List of Signatories

March 13, 2020

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