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Senator Linda Stewart and Representative Emily Slosberg File Bills to Create Tracking System for Sexual Assault Evidence Kits

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Today, **Senator Linda Stewart (D–Orlando)** and **Representative Emily Slosberg (D–Boca Raton)** filed [SB 1002](#) and [HB 673](#), which would require the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to create and maintain a statewide system for tracking sexual assault evidence kits from the point of collection through the criminal justice process. The tracking system would be accessible to survivors of sexual assault, giving them the option of opting-in for updates on the status of the evidence in their case.

Every year, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and local crime labs around the state receive thousands of sexual assault kits for processing; however, there is currently no centralized method for tracking the location or processing status of sexual assault kits once they are collected. The intent of **SB 1002** and **HB 673** is to create additional accountability measures and to empower survivors with information on the evidence in their cases, should they want it.

“I was proud to support the Legislature’s previous action to clear the backlog of sexual assault kits and ensure kits are tested in a timely manner,” said **Senator Stewart**. “This bill continues that work and is an important next step demonstrating the state’s commitment to empowering sexual assault survivors.

“This critical legislation will bring more accountability and transparency to the forensic process for sexual assault kits and puts the power back into survivor’s hands,” stated **Representative Slosberg**. “Every survivor should have the right to know what is going on with his or her case and his or her kit. Sadly, in many cases, survivors are left in the dark feeling powerless in this process. My hope is that these bills will put more power into the hands of survivors.”

On the bills, the **Florida Council Against Sexual Violence** stated: “Addressing

the needs of survivors requires a multi-pronged approach, and the sexual assault kit and its processing are part of a system working to empower and acknowledge an individual's right to self-determination. In order to holistically support victims, we must provide access to therapy and advocacy services, train healthcare personnel to explain and conduct medical forensic exams in a trauma-informed and victim-centered way, and provide information about survivor rights along with updates about the status of their kits.”

Ilse Knecht, the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Joyful Heart Foundation said: “We are proud to stand alongside Representative Emily Slosberg in support of Gail's Law, which would create a state-wide rape kit tracking system in Florida. Behind every kit is a person—a sexual assault survivor—waiting for justice. Giving survivors a choice about receiving information regarding their case can help counter the loss of self-determination and control at the core of the sexual assault experience. By establishing a sexual assault kit tracking system, Florida will show survivors that they matter, what happened to them matters, and those in power are serious about increasing accountability and transparency around the rape kit handling process in Florida.”

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