



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Unit
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POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 4, 2025
BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 669 **POSITION:** Letter of Information
BILL TITLE: Public Safety – Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund - Alterations

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This legislation seeks to amend the purpose and use of the Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund. By expanding the duties of the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) relating to the Fund and prohibiting the use of the Fund for the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Tracking System.

Under current law, the Rape Kit Testing Grant Fund provides law enforcement agencies with funding to pay for testing of current sexual assault evidence kits collected by forensic laboratories. The Fund is used by the Forensic laboratory to perform forensic analysis. The Executive Director of The GOCPP administers the Fund, establishes procedures for the distribution of the Fund to ensure each jurisdiction in the State that has a forensic laboratory is able to access the Fund for testing.

The Rape Kit Testing Grant was established to focus on current sexual assault kits. This was done in order to accommodate increased numbers of sexual assault kit submissions resulting from legislation that now requires all sexual assault kits to be tested. House Bill 675 proposes to change the original purpose of the state Rape Kit Testing Grant fund to a purpose already covered by the federal Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) grant program.

Since the implementation of the state Rape Kit Grant fund, logistical challenges have prevented forensic laboratories from fully utilizing the available funding, despite their intent to do so. Issues such as funding gaps between calendar years, the limitations of single-year grant periods, and the inability to use the funds for necessary physical laboratory improvements to enhance in-house testing capacity have arisen. These concerns were all brought to the attention of the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Policy and Funding Committee.

Testing sexual assault kits is a vital step in providing justice for survivors of sexual assault. Supporting rape kit testing demonstrates a commitment to the rights and dignity of survivors. The testing and collection of these kits are essential for ensuring justice and preventing future crimes and supporting the right of sexual assault survivors.

The Maryland State Police support any effort that will augment efforts to get the back log of sexual assault kits tested and address current caseloads. We are aware that there are discussions regarding amendments to this bill and we are happy to continue to work with the sponsor on them.

The Maryland Department of State Police hopes you find this information useful as you consider Senate Bill 669.