



April 5, 2016

To: Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Chair
Senator Maile Shimabukuro Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: HB 1907 HD2 SD1 Relating to Sexual Assault
Hearing: Monday, April 4, 2016, 9:15 a.m., Room 211

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of HB 1907 HD2 SD1 Relating to Sex Assault which proposes a process of expedited testing of all sexual assault evidence kits and increased reporting requirements for law enforcement agencies; noting that the current version of this measure merely requires an inventory of the kits to be reported to the Office of the Attorney General.

For many years we have been concerned about the number of unprocessed sex assault evidence kits. Approximately a decade ago we were told that there were approximately 1,000 kits that had not been tested and that the cost to process them would be approximately \$1 million and that the police department did not have the funds to process them. We have been told more recently that there was no backlog of unprocessed kits.

We would like to know the true status of the kits. Evidence obtained from survivors is precious. It is taken when they are most vulnerable with the hope that evidence gathered would help find and convict the perpetrator. Their brave efforts should not go to waste nor should the evidence be dismissed so easily. Sexual assault is a serious crime. Processing kits can help uncover serial rapists.

Since other jurisdictions have instituted policies of processing untested kits, the position in opposition by Honolulu's Prosecuting Attorney is puzzling and should be a cause for concern by the legislature. Other jurisdictions have determined the processing of kits to be a priority because sexual assault is a horrific crime in which forensic evidence is crucial. We hope that the State of Hawai'i will also place the same high priority on solving sexual assault cases.

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls. It is because of this mission, the Women's Caucus supports this important measure. We ask that the committee pass the measure. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, April 04, 2016 12:20 AM
To: JDLTestimony
Cc:
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1907 on Apr 4, 2016 09:15AM

HB1907

Submitted on: 4/4/2016

Testimony for JDL/WAM on Apr 4, 2016 09:15AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann S Freed	Hawaii Women's Coalition	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Chair Tokuda, Chair Keith-Agaran and members, As in previous testimony the Coalition is on strong support of this measure. It's seems the least we can do to get a handle on the 1000 or so rape kits that are sitting on shelves untested. We are sure that the victims of sex assault who submitted to a forensic exam, had an expectation that their rape kits would be processed immediately. Imagine their horror in finding out through recent news reports that that did not happen. Please pass this bill. It's the very least we can do. The next step should be to test ALL of the kits and enter them into the FBI's data base. How many serial rapists are still out there because this was not done? Mahalo, Ann S Freed, Co-Chair Hawaii Women's Coalition

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