



RYAN GUILLEN
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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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GUILLEN SEEKS JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF SEX CRIMES

Grant Program Accelerates Rape Kit Testing Process

AUSTIN - Texas State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas) is an author of HB 1729, a bill which creates a statewide grant program for testing evidence related to sex crimes. The bill was signed into law by Governor Abbott on **Monday, May 29**.

"The state of Texas currently processes sexual assault kits at a shamefully slow rate," said Rep. Guillen. "This bill seeks to speed up the process, and help victims receive the due justice they deserve."

In January, Texas had a backlog of approximately 3,500 untested sexual assault kits, and each kit could cost anywhere between \$500 and \$2000 to analyze by law enforcement. The high cost has caused counties across the state to postpone testing, leading to an obstructive pause in sexual assault cases being processed. Victims awaiting justice often feel helpless as resources needed to close their case are delayed by budget limitations. The new law will create a grant program to fund the testing of sexual assault kits, and help ensure that evidence does not go unexamined.

"Victims of sexual assault deserve closure, and deserve our support," said Representative Guillen. "In order for law enforcement and the court system to function properly, they need access to the resources necessary to complete their investigation."

This Act will direct the Texas Department of Public Safety to establish a statewide Evidence Testing Grant Program to aid in the testing evidence for sexual assault cases. The program will be funded by voluntary donations, where Texans applying for or renewing a driver's license will have the option of donating \$1 or more to help out. All of the funds acquired through the program will be distributed to local law enforcement to help test the backlog of sexual assault kits, and help victims of sex crimes seek justice. With this program, the public will have a chance to be directly involved in bring justice to victims of sexual assault.

"By creating a publicly funded grant program we can empower our fellow Texans to positively impact how our state processes sexual assault cases," said Guillen.

This Act goes into effect **September 1, 2017**.

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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