



RYAN GUILLEN
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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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GUILLEN SEEKS JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF SEX CRIMES
Grant Program Provides Needed Funds for Evidence Testing, Prosecution

AUSTIN - Texas State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas) is a coauthor of HB 1729, a bill which creates a statewide grant program for testing evidence related to sex crimes. HB 1729 was engrossed in the House on **Thursday, April 6**, and was referred to the Senate committee on Criminal Justice on **Wednesday, April 19**.

"The state of Texas needs to do everything in its power to ensure that the victims of sex crimes receive the attention and justice they deserve," said Rep. Guillen. "HB 1729 will help victims achieve that justice."

In January, Texas had a backlog of approximately 3,500 untested sexual assault kits. The kits cost between \$500 and \$2,000 to analyze by law enforcement. The high cost has caused many counties across the state to postpone testing, leading to a delay in sexual assault cases being solved. Victims awaiting justice often feel helpless because evidence needed to close their case remains untested. HB 1729 will create a grant program that funds the testing of these sexual assault kits, and will help ensure that evidence does not go unexamined.

"In order for law enforcement and the court system to properly do their job, they need access to proper resources, including funding for evidence analysis," said Rep. Guillen.

HB 1729 will direct the Texas Department of Public Safety to establish a statewide Evidence Testing Grant Program to aide law enforcement agencies testing evidence resulting from sex crimes. Anybody in the state applying for or renewing a driver's license may donate \$1 or more to this grant program. All of the funds acquired through the grant 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 helping bring justice to victims of sexual assault.

"The more cases we can solve through these kits, the more victims we can help" said Representative Guillen. "We owe it to the victims of sexual assault to provide the reassurance that justice is forthcoming."

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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