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**MADIGAN PROPOSES BILL TO REQUIRE LAW ENFORCEMENT TO
SUBMIT EVIDENCE IN SEXUAL ASSAULT CASES**

***Legislation Would Make Illinois First in Nation to Mandate Submitting
Evidence in Sexual Assault Cases***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced new legislation that would make Illinois the first state in the nation to mandate the submission of sexual assault evidence for testing in response to mounting concerns that law enforcement agencies aren't automatically submitting physical evidence for inclusion in sexual assault investigations.

"Women who are victims of rape put their trust in authorities to bring their offenders to justice. When evidence that is so painstakingly collected sits untested, stored away on police departments' shelves, that trust is violated. This mandate must be put in place to assure rape victims that their cases will be effectively prosecuted and their offenders put behind bars," Madigan said. "This legislation will put Illinois at the forefront of this issue and help bring about justice for victims."

The legislation, which is sponsored by Sen. Toi Hutchinson (D-40th) and Rep. Emily McCassey (D-85th), would require all evidence of sexual assault to be submitted by the investigating law enforcement agency within 10 days of receiving it from the hospital. If the bill is passed, it also would require all law enforcement agencies to provide Illinois State Police with an inventory of all untested kits in their possession.

"The process of gathering physical evidence in a sex assault case is difficult for the victim. If the evidence is never tested, the victim is in a very real sense revictimized," said Sen. Hutchinson. "This bill will ensure that the most important evidence in a sexual assault case is always tested. More offenders will be convicted, and more profiles will go into the database. I am happy to stand with the Attorney General on this important issue."

"This bill is the next step in making sure that law enforcement can make the strongest case against an offender and that the DNA database will be an even stronger tool for identifying repeat offenders and solving cold cases," said Rep. McCassey. "This bill sends a message that we are serious about protecting the people of Illinois and seeing that those who offend are punished. I look forward to working with the Attorney General and Senator Hutchinson to see that this bill becomes law."

"When a rape victim agrees to the lengthy and invasive process of evidence collection from her body, she does so fully believing that that evidence will be delivered to the lab and analyzed," said Lyn Schollett, General Counsel for the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "When that evidence is not delivered—when it is abandoned in evidence lockers or left at a police station—the victim is further traumatized and the public trust is betrayed."

Madigan said the legislation was drafted in response to a growing concern that physical evidence collected from sexual assault victims and crime scenes wasn't being properly submitted for analysis. Last fall, Attorney General Madigan convened a working group to research and develop an effective statewide policy to clear up inconsistent approaches to gathering and analyzing evidence in sexual assault cases. Members of the working group included representatives from the Illinois State Police, Chicago Police Department, Bollingbrook Police Department and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

"The Illinois State Police is committed to providing quality forensic science analysis in the investigation of criminal sexual assault cases and welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Illinois Attorney General's Office and others in the criminal justice system to identify ways to improve the current process," said Illinois State Police Director Jonathon E. Monken. "The proposed legislation will provide consistency and clarification to all law enforcement agencies who collect and submit cases for forensic analysis. The

prompt submission of such evidence will help us be more effective in providing critical forensic information to the agencies investigating these crimes.

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