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AARON COLEMAN
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Judiciary Committee
Representative Fred Patton, Chairman

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

KBI Director Kirk Thompson said in a press release that in 2017 2,200 untested sexual assault kits were submitted and went untested. If a person goes through the trouble to report a sexual assault and undergo a sexual assault kit, that kit should be tested. From my research, a sexual assault kit takes 4 hours to complete and up to 10 hours total including waiting time to receive the kit.

This time burden alone, including retraumatization done onto victims by having to retell their story to nurses and detectives, is already a disincentive to report a sexual assault. Victims are retraumatized, only for the kit to not be tested. In 2020, due to covid, fewer people stepped forward and reported sexual assaults leading to a test kit being performed. People feel unsafe to go to a hospital. Sadly, while the number of kits performed has decreased we know the number of sexual assaults hasn't. When we live in a time when people already struggle to report sexual assaults -- do they need more reasons to not report it?

If DNA is tested it is entered into a national database, Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), repeat offenders can be tracked down if their DNA is found on multiple victims or if found on the same victim more than once. One research study in the Sage Journal suggests "more than 87% of alcohol-involved sexual assault was committed by serial perpetrators." If testing can save even one would-be-victim from a serial perpetrator then this bill would be a success.

I urge the Members of the committee to protect some of the most vulnerable and defenseless in our society by voting YES on HB2228 and making sure victims receive the justice they deserve in a timely manner before another serial perpetrator re-offends before the first kit is ever even tested.

Thank you for your attention
-Rep. Aaron Coleman, House District 37