

Acts (2021)

Chapter 35

AN ACT RELATIVE TO SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE KITS.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to require forthwith testing of previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 2A of chapter 5 of the acts of 2019 is hereby amended by striking out item 8100-1014, as amended by section 40 of chapter 142 of the acts of 2019, and inserting in place thereof the following item:-

8100-1014.. For costs associated with the collection and testing of all previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits by the crime laboratory within the department of state police or by an accredited private crime laboratory designated by the secretary of public safety and security; provided, that all previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits shall be tested within 180 days of the effective date of this act; provided further, that for the purposes of this item, “previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits” shall mean any sexual assault evidence kit or additional

evidence collected contemporaneously with such kit that has not been subjected to a forensic DNA analysis intended to develop an autosomal DNA profile that is eligible for entry into CODIS and the state DNA databases; and provided further, that any unexpended funds in this item shall not revert but shall be made available for the purposes of this item until June 30, 2022..... \$8,000,000

SECTION 2. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits which contain quantity limited evidence, as defined in 515 CMR 8.02, shall be identified by the state police crime laboratory within 90 days of the effective date of this act. Within said 90-day period, the state police crime laboratory shall notify the relevant prosecuting district attorney's office and each district attorney's office shall notify individuals who submitted to a sexual assault evidence kit if: (i) their kits contain quantity limited evidence; and (ii) the district attorney's office has not authorized the state police crime laboratory to proceed with testing.

(b) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits which are not identified by the state police crime laboratory as quantity limited evidence, as defined in 515 CMR 8.02, in accordance with subsection (a), shall be transferred within 180 days of the effective date of this act to an accredited public or private crime laboratory designated by the secretary of public safety and security for testing; provided, that the district attorney shall provide notice to individuals who submitted to the sexual assault evidence kit that their kits have been so transferred; provided further, that for untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits associated with a case which has resulted

in a conviction or a guilty plea, the district attorney for the district in which the case was prosecuted shall contact the individual who submitted to a sexual assault evidence kit and obtain consent to test the kit notwithstanding the conviction or guilty plea.

(c) Not later than January 1, 2022, and quarterly thereafter, the executive office of public safety and security shall file a report with the clerks of the house of representatives and senate and the joint committee on public safety and homeland security on the status of testing untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following information: (i) the number of untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits in the possession of public crime laboratories prior to the effective date of this act; (ii) the year each kit was collected; (iii) the date each kit was tested; and (iv) the date the resulting information was entered into CODIS and the state DNA databases. The initial report, and all subsequent reports, shall be made publicly available on the executive office's website not later than January 1, 2022, and quarterly thereafter.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits" shall mean any sexual assault evidence kit or additional evidence collected contemporaneously with such kit that has not been subjected to a forensic DNA analysis intended to develop an autosomal DNA profile that is eligible for entry into CODIS and the state DNA databases.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect as of July 1, 2021.

Approved, August 3, 2021.