



State of Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette

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Schuette, Worthy, Etue, Craig Announce New Resources for Sexual Assault Evidence Kit Cases

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LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, Michigan State Police Director Colonel Kriste Kibbey Etue and Detroit Police Department Chief James E. Craig today announced they have expanded the Wayne County Sexual Assault Kit Task Force responsible for investigating and prosecuting leads resulting from the DNA testing of thousands of abandoned sexual assault kits discovered in a Detroit Police Department property storage facility in 2009.

The Task Force, comprised of officials from the Department of Attorney General, Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, Michigan State Police, Detroit Police Department, Michigan Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Prevention and Treatment Board, Wayne County SAFE, the YWCA and the Joyful Heart Foundation is funded by the participants and a one-time, \$3 million state appropriation approved by the legislature last year. Following the development of a work and spending plan, the task force is expected to operate in this expanded capacity until September 30, 2017.

Today's announcement is another step forward on the road to justice for victims whose sexual assault DNA evidence kits were never processed, allowing rapists to remain on the streets perpetrating more sexual assaults. Previously, in June 2013, Schuette and Worthy joined Governor Snyder to announce the use of \$4 million in legal settlement funds obtained by the Department of Attorney General to fund the testing of thousands of evidence kits by the Michigan State Police. With today's agreement, the task force will increase the rate at which leads produced by the testing will be investigated and prosecuted, prioritized by a focus on the worst offenders, the statute of limitations and the risk to public safety.

"Our duty is to get rapists off our streets and deliver the justice victims are owed," said Schuette. "The organizations working together on this task force have made this effort a priority and I am proud to be a part of it."

"It is nice to officially welcome the Department of the Attorney General to our longstanding collaborative," said Worthy. "These additional resources will enable us to not only continue our work

on the Detroit cases, but will enable us to follow through on DNA hits outside of Wayne County and the State of Michigan that we have not been able to focus on before. This, in conjunction with our Enough SAID Initiative is moving this project along.”

“The use of criminal analysts to support investigators in our Secure Cities detective bureaus has been a tremendous asset that has not only lessened the burden on investigators, but also increased the solvability of crimes,” said Etue. “We are pleased to be able to offer this valuable assistance to this long overdue effort to bring justice for these victims.”

“This is truly a collaborative effort and the Detroit Police Department is committed to working with the Attorney General, Wayne County Prosecutor and the Michigan State Police to bring closure to the victims of these heinous crimes,” said Craig. “I’m confident that, with all of these resources focused on solving these cases, we will be able to solve many of them and bring these criminals to justice.”

Each entity has assumed the following responsibilities and may seek to provide the following personnel for the task force, funded by the \$3 million appropriation:

- **Attorney General:** Investigation and prosecution of cross-jurisdictional and out-of-state cold case sexual assaults, in conjunction with county prosecutors: Two full-time investigators and one Assistant Attorney General (prosecutor) on the task force.
- **Wayne County Prosecutor:** Prosecution of cases in Wayne County: Two prosecutors, one Crime Victim Advocate, one paralegal/statistician, one clerical assistant and one investigator on the task force.
- **Michigan State Police:** Analytics and data reports on sexual assault kits as they are tested, investigated and prosecuted, and assistance on investigations: Two Criminal Intelligence Analysts, one in Detroit and one in Lansing.
- **Detroit Police:** Six investigators, currently housed in the Wayne county Prosecutor's Office, at no cost to the task force. The Detroit Police Department will investigate sexual assaults in the City of Detroit and cross-jurisdictional matters involving the City of Detroit.

Ongoing Efforts to Bring Justice for Victims, Strengthen Public Safety

In 2009, more than 11,000 untested sexual assault kits dating back more than 30 years were discovered in a Detroit Police Department property storage facility, each holding the potential to solve multiple crimes, including those committed by serial rapists. The MSP’s Forensic Science Division has been instrumental in the laboratory analysis of sexual assault kits by working with privately contracted laboratories, the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, and the Detroit Police Department, on efforts to test the remaining sexual assault kits. A majority of these kits have been tested and the remainder should be completed by this fall.

Michigan victims of sexual violence are encouraged to call the national sexual assault hotline toll-free, 1-800-656-HOPE. All calls are confidential, and will be answered by a local counseling center affiliated with the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN). Assistance is also available online at www.rainn.org.

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