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Gov. Snyder: Michigan State Police completes testing of shelved sexual assault evidence kits in Wayne Co.

Project 8000 culminates five years of intense efforts from MSP, AG, Prosecutor Worthy and many others to obtain justice for survivors

LANSING, MI – Survivors of sexual assault in Detroit are one step closer to justice after the announcement that more than 10,000 sexual assault evidence kits discovered on a shelf in a warehouse several years ago have been processed and the results sent to investigators for further action.

Today, Gov. Snyder, Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue of the Michigan State Police, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, Laura Moody of Attorney General Bill Schuette's office, and Debi Cain, director of the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, all made remarks at a press conference that highlighted the completion of the forensic testing and outlined the next steps in seeking justice for survivors.

"The completion of the forensic examination of these sexual assault evidence kits is long overdue, and I commend all the various parties that came together to make this a priority and get it done," Snyder said. "Survivors of sexual assault crimes deserve swift justice, and we will continue working to make sure a stockpile of this nature never again occurs in Michigan. Many steps have been within state government to prioritize this project and we will continue pushing forward for the resolution of these cases."

Etue stated: "Since the discovery of these sexual assault evidence kits in 2009, the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division and Biometrics and Identification Division have been dedicated to seeking justice for these survivors; initially using federal grant funds and most recently using state dollars to ensure each evidence kit has the opportunity to be tested. What we have found by testing the evidence from

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these cases in Detroit are connections to either criminal cases or individuals in 35 states plus the District of Columbia, proving this laboratory service was important not just for Wayne County or Michigan, but for the entire nation.”

“Each of the thousands of kits that have been tested represent a person who was victimized by a violent offender,” Schuette said. “As we move forward into the investigation and prosecution phase, we are proud to partner with Prosecutor Kym Worthy, Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue and Gov. Rick Snyder in providing justice and closure for the victims of these horrific crimes. I pledge to work with every county so that all sexual assault kits can be tested no matter where they are found. My goal is zero backlog for sexual assault kits in Michigan.”

A supplemental budget enacted in 2013 by Gov. Snyder included funding to test an additional 8,000 sexual assault evidence kits, after the first 2,000 were initially processed by the MSP using federal grants. The state approved \$4 million in funding for the 8000 Project, with an additional \$3 million for the Attorney General’s office to assist in prosecuting the offenders identified by the testing. Additional money raised from private donors and nonprofits, organized by the Michigan Women’s Foundation Enough SAID project, is expected to help with next steps and prosecution efforts.

“We have been working tirelessly to bring justice to sexual assault victims since 2009,” Worthy said. “Through various collaborations and partnerships, we have been able to do so on local, state, and national levels. Getting the rape kits tested was only the first step. Now we must investigate and prosecute all of the cases that have CODIS hits. We must also take a second look at those that did not have CODIS hits.”

In all, a total of 10,087 sexual assault evidence kits from the Detroit Police Department have been tested, resulting in 2,616 associations in the FBI’s Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), including associations to either criminal cases or individuals in 35 states and the District of Columbia. CODIS is used to search DNA profiles obtained from crime scene evidence against DNA profiles from other crime scenes and from convicted offenders and arrestees to generate leads in cases when an association is obtained.

“We need to ensure the voices of survivors of sexual assault are always heard,” Cain said. “Completion of the 8000 Project is an important step forward in acknowledging the survivors who came forward and had rape kits done after their assault – these are victims who are no longer forgotten.”

Legislation signed into law by Snyder in 2014 also sets new procedures and standards for prompt testing of sexual assault evidence kits statewide, so that a stockpile of this magnitude is prevented from occurring in the future. Increased funding of \$3.4 million in the 2016 state budget allocates resources to accelerate the resolution of sexual assault cases, including \$1.7 million for the collection, submission, and timely testing of all sexual assault kits and \$1.7 million for the prosecution of cases.

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To learn more about sexual assault prevention and resources for survivors, please visit the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board [website](#).

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