

RAPE KIT PROCESSING AMENDMENTS

2014 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

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LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill modifies the provisions of the Utah Code of Criminal Procedure regarding the victim's bill of rights.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

▶ provides that a victim of a sexual offense has the following rights:

- to be informed whether the DNA profile of the assailant was obtained;
- to be informed whether the DNA profile of the assailant has been entered into the Utah Combined DNA Index System;
- to be informed if there is a match between the DNA profile of the assailant and a DNA profile contained in the Utah Combined DNA Index System, provided the disclosure of this information would not impede or compromise an ongoing investigation; and
- to designate a person to receive information provided by law enforcement;

29 ▶ provides that a law enforcement agency that chooses not to analyze DNA evidence
30 in a case where the identity of the perpetrator is in doubt shall inform the victim of
31 that decision;

32 ▶ provides that a law enforcement agency shall provide written notification to a victim
33 or the victim's designee 60 days before destroying or disposing of evidence from an
34 unsolved sexual assault case;

35 ▶ provides that the law enforcement office where the sexual offense is reported shall
36 have the responsibility to inform the victim of these rights; and

37 ▶ provides that a victim may designate a person of the victim's choosing to receive
38 any information from the law enforcement agency.

39 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

40 None

41 **Other Special Clauses:**

42 None

43 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

44 AMENDS:

45 77-37-3, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2011, Chapter 177



47 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

48 Section 1. Section 77-37-3 is amended to read:

49 **77-37-3. Bill of rights.**

50 (1) The bill of rights for victims and witnesses is:

51 (a) Victims and witnesses have a right to be informed as to the level of protection from
52 intimidation and harm available to them, and from what sources, as they participate in criminal
53 justice proceedings as designated by Section 76-8-508, regarding witness tampering, and
54 Section 76-8-509, regarding threats against a victim. Law enforcement, prosecution, and
55 corrections personnel have the duty to timely provide this information in a form which is useful
56 to the victim.

57 (b) Victims and witnesses, including children and their guardians, have a right to be
58 informed and assisted as to their role in the criminal justice process. All criminal justice
59 agencies have the duty to provide this information and assistance.

60 (c) Victims and witnesses have a right to clear explanations regarding relevant legal
61 proceedings; these explanations shall be appropriate to the age of child victims and witnesses.
62 All criminal justice agencies have the duty to provide these explanations.

63 (d) Victims and witnesses should have a secure waiting area that does not require them
64 to be in close proximity to defendants or the family and friends of defendants. Agencies
65 controlling facilities shall, whenever possible, provide this area.

66 (e) Victims may seek restitution or reparations, including medical costs, as provided in
67 Title 63M, Chapter 7, Criminal Justice and Substance Abuse, and Sections [62A-7-109.5](#),
68 [77-38a-302](#), and [77-27-6](#). State and local government agencies that serve victims have the duty
69 to have a functional knowledge of the procedures established by the Crime Victim Reparations
70 Board and to inform victims of these procedures.

71 (f) Victims and witnesses have a right to have any personal property returned as
72 provided in Sections [77-24-1](#) through [77-24-5](#). Criminal justice agencies shall expeditiously
73 return the property when it is no longer needed for court law enforcement or prosecution
74 purposes.

75 (g) Victims and witnesses have the right to reasonable employer intercession services,
76 including pursuing employer cooperation in minimizing employees' loss of pay and other
77 benefits resulting from their participation in the criminal justice process. Officers of the court
78 shall provide these services and shall consider victims' and witnesses' schedules so that
79 activities which conflict can be avoided. Where conflicts cannot be avoided, the victim may
80 request that the responsible agency intercede with employers or other parties.

81 (h) Victims and witnesses, particularly children, should have a speedy disposition of
82 the entire criminal justice process. All involved public agencies shall establish policies and
83 procedures to encourage speedy disposition of criminal cases.

84 (i) Victims and witnesses have the right to timely notice of judicial proceedings they

85 are to attend and timely notice of cancellation of any proceedings. Criminal justice agencies
86 have the duty to provide these notifications. Defense counsel and others have the duty to
87 provide timely notice to prosecution of any continuances or other changes that may be required.

88 (j) Victims of sexual offenses have ~~[a]~~ the following rights:

89 (i) the right to ~~[be informed of their right to]~~ request voluntary testing for themselves
90 for HIV infection as provided in Section 76-5-503 and to request mandatory testing of the
91 alleged sexual offender for HIV infection as provided in Section 76-5-502~~[. The law~~
92 enforcement office where the sexual offense is reported shall have the responsibility to inform
93 victims of this right.];

94 (ii) the right to be informed whether a DNA profile was obtained from the testing of
95 the rape kit evidence or from other crime scene evidence;

96 (iii) the right to be informed whether a DNA profile developed from the rape kit
97 evidence or other crime scene evidence has been entered into the Utah Combined DNA Index
98 System;

99 (iv) the right to be informed whether there is a match between a DNA profile
100 developed from the rape kit evidence or other crime scene evidence and a DNA profile
101 contained in the Utah Combined DNA Index System, provided that disclosure would not
102 impede or compromise an ongoing investigation; and

103 (v) the right to designate a person of the victim's choosing to act as a recipient of the
104 information provided under this Subsection (1)(j) and under Subsections (2) and (3).

105 (k) Subsections (1)(j)(ii) through (iv) do not require that the law enforcement agency
106 communicate with the victim or the victim's designee regarding the status of DNA testing,
107 absent a specific request received from the victim or the victim's designee.

108 (2) The law enforcement agency investigating a sexual offense may:

109 (a) release the information indicated in Subsections (1)(j)(ii) through (iv) upon the
110 request of a victim or the victim's designee and is the designated agency to provide that
111 information to the victim or the victim's designee;

112 (b) require that the victim's request be in writing; and

113 (c) respond to the victim's request with verbal communication, written communication,
114 or by email, if an email address is available.

115 (3) The law enforcement agency investigating a sexual offense has the following
116 authority and responsibilities:

117 (a) If the law enforcement agency determines that DNA evidence will not be analyzed
118 in a case where the identity of the perpetrator has not been confirmed, the law enforcement
119 agency shall notify the victim or the victim's designee.

120 (b) (i) If the law enforcement agency intends to destroy or dispose of rape kit evidence
121 or other crime scene evidence from an unsolved sexual assault case, the law enforcement
122 agency shall provide written notification of that intention and information on how to appeal the
123 decision to the victim or the victim's designee of that intention.

124 (ii) Written notification under this Subsection (3) shall be made not fewer than 60 days
125 prior to the destruction or disposal of the rape kit evidence or other crime scene evidence.

126 (c) A law enforcement agency responsible for providing information under Subsections
127 (1)(j)(ii) through (iv), (2), and (3) shall do so in a timely manner and, upon request of the
128 victim or the victim's designee, shall advise the victim or the victim's designee of any
129 significant changes in the information of which the law enforcement agency is aware.

130 (d) The law enforcement agency investigating the sexual offense is responsible for
131 informing the victim or the victim's designee of the rights established under Subsections
132 (1)(j)(ii) through (iv) and (2), and this Subsection (3).

133 [~~(2)~~] (4) Informational rights of the victim under this chapter are based upon the victim
134 providing the [victim's] current [~~address and telephone number~~] name, address, telephone
135 number, and email address, if an email address is available, of the person to whom the
136 information should be provided to the criminal justice agencies involved in the case.