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March 17, 2017

Assemblymember David Chiu
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

Dear Assemblymember Chiu,

The Joyful Heart Foundation strongly supports **Assembly Bill 41**, which would require law enforcement agencies to participate in the California Department of Justice (Cal DOJ) SAFE-T system. This bill would increase transparency around how law enforcement agencies handle rape kits and promote ongoing accountability in the rape kit reform process.

Every year, thousands of sexual assault victims undergo invasive and exhaustive forensic medical exams, which can take between four and six hours, to collect evidence left behind by their attackers. This evidence is preserved in what is commonly called a rape kit. When tested, DNA evidence can identify an unknown assailant and connect crimes together, revealing serial offenders.

Currently, there is little transparency around how rape kits are handled in California. The state has no way to track the location and status of each rape kit collected. In 2014, California enacted a law that stating that law enforcement agencies "should" submit all newly collected rape kits for testing within 20 days of being booked into evidence. This is not a mandate, and there is no way to determine whether every agency in the state is following this guidance.

A.B. 41 closes this gap by requiring law enforcement agencies to create a complete profile for each newly collected rape kit received into evidence within 120 days, and requires Cal DOJ to report this data annually to the legislature. These data collection and reporting provisions will shed light on how rape kits are handled across California.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to this issue. The Joyful Heart Foundation stands ready to assist you in your efforts to bring rape kit reform to California, and offer a path to justice and healing for all sexual assault survivors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ilse Knecht". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ilse Knecht

Director, Policy & Advocacy