

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1017

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 7, 2024

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1017.

As reported by the committee, this bill requires sexual assault victims to be notified of certain developments concerning the evidence in their cases.

Specifically, the bill expands the State's "Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights" (SAVBR) to give sexual assault victims the right to be informed if:

(1) a DNA profile of an assailant was obtained from the processing of evidence in the sexual assault case;

(2) a DNA profile of an assailant has been entered into any data bank designed or intended to be used for the retention or comparison of case evidence;

(3) there is a match between the DNA profile of an assailant obtained in the sexual assault case and a DNA profile contained in any data bank designed or intended to be used for the retention or comparison of case evidence; and

(4) sexual assault evidence is submitted to a forensic laboratory, if that evidence is compared against any data bank, and the results of the comparison.

Additionally, under the bill, upon a victim's request, the law enforcement agency with the primary responsibility for investigating a sexual assault case is required to inform the victim of the status of the processing of all evidence collected in that case. The bill authorizes the victim to designate another person of the victim's choosing to receive information requested by the sexual assault victim or any notice required by the bill. The victim is responsible for keeping the law enforcement agency informed of the name, address, telephone number, and electronic mail address of the person to whom the information should be provided, and of any changes in this information.

Under current law, the SAVBR includes a brief provision concerning the right of sexual assault victims to receive information about the status of evidence upon request. The language of the bill provides further details and clarity regarding the rights of sexual assault victims and the obligations of law enforcement concerning that information.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.