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31 Years of Feminism From Marching in the Streets to a Seat at the Table

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Feb. 4, 2019

Honorable Connie Leyva
State Capitol, Room 4061, Sacramento, CA 95814
Email: jessica.golly@sen.ca.gov

RE: SB 22 (Leyva) Rape Kits: testing - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Leyva,

On behalf of the Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee (SBWPC), I am writing to express support for SB 22 addressing testing of rape kits. SBWPC's mission is dedicated to furthering gender equality and other feminist values through political and social action and educational activities. Our organization is one of the largest women's political committees in Santa Barbara County with well over 300 members. We advocate for a diverse set of positions including Crimes Against Women (<http://sbwpc.org/positions/>).

SBWPC is well aware that many thousands of rape kits which could provide important evidence of crimes have languished untested across the state of California for years. Penal Code § 680 states that the kits should be processed, and that DNA evidence gathered from these kits should be appropriately reported. Unfortunately, this imprecise language has allowed thousands of kits to go untested with no legal consequences. SB 22 provides that Penal Code § 680 be amended to read that rape kits shall be submitted to an appropriate lab, shall be processed, and that DNA profiles created shall be uploaded into CODIS, all within effective time frames specified in the bill. The bill allocates funds from the General Fund to local law enforcement agencies to help them to comply with these requirements. We believe this is appropriate particularly when the trauma of a rape followed by an invasive evidence gathering procedure are considered.

Individual survivors are unquestionably deserving of having their rape kits tested in a timely manner. In addition, there exists significant potential that the DNA evidence gathered will help law enforcement to identify and convict serial criminals who otherwise would likely go uncharged for additional offenses that they have committed. The Santa Barbara Women's Political Committee regards SB 22 as an important step forward in ensuring that all survivors have their rape kits tested and that perpetrators be brought to justice. **Therefore, SBWPC wishes to sign on as a supporter of the bill.**

Thank you for reviewing our organization's position on this issue. Should you wish to communicate further with us, please email us at info@sbwpc.org or visit our website: www.sbwpc.org

Sincerely,

Luz Reyes-Martín, President SBWPC

Cc: Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, nora.lynn@sen.ca.gov
Assembly Member Monique Limón, *Email:* ilan.zur@asm.ca.gov