

1 SB41
2 196856-3
3 By Senator Ward
4 RFD: Judiciary
5 First Read: 05-MAR-19
6 PFD: 02/27/2019

8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would create the Sexual Assault
9 Survivors Bill of Rights and provide certain rights
10 to all victims of sexual assault.

11 This bill would require written notification
12 of the rights be provided to sexual assault
13 victims.

14 This bill also creates the Sexual Assault
15 Task Force.

16
17 A BILL

18 TO BE ENTITLED

19 AN ACT

20
21 Relating to sexual assault victims; to provide
22 certain rights to victims of sexual assault; to require
23 written notification of the rights be provided to sexual
24 assault victims; and to create the Sexual Assault Task Force.

25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

26 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited
27 as the Sexual Assault Survivors Bill of Rights.

Section 2. (a) A sexual assault survivor has the following rights:

(1) Not to be prevented from, or charged for, receiving a medical forensic examination.

(2) To have a sexual assault evidence collection kit or its probative contents preserved by law enforcement, without charge, for at least 20 years, or until the survivor reaches 40 years of age if the survivor was a minor when the assault occurred.

(3) Upon request, to be informed by the investigating law enforcement agency, of test results from the sexual assault evidence kit, including a DNA profile match, or other information collected as part of a medical forensic examination, if the disclosure would not impede or compromise an ongoing law enforcement investigation.

(4) Upon written request, to be informed of policies governing the collection and preservation of a sexual assault evidence collection kit.

(5) Upon written request, to receive written notification, from the investigating law enforcement agency with custody of the kit or its probative contents, of the intended destruction or disposal of the kit or its probative contents at least 60 days before the intended destruction or disposal.

(6) Upon written request, to be granted further preservation of the kit or its probative contents for an additional 20 years.

(7) To be informed of the rights under this subsection.

(b) The term sexual assault, as used in this section, is defined as any nonconsensual sexual act proscribed by federal, tribal, or state law, including when the victim lacks capacity to consent.

Section 3. The Attorney General shall develop a survivor notification document to be distributed by a law enforcement officer or a medical provider upon initial contact with a survivor of sexual assault. The notification document shall be made available on the Attorney General's public website. The document shall include, but is not limited to, the following information:

(1) A clear statement that the survivor has the right not to be prevented from, nor charged for, receiving a sexual assault medical forensic examination.

(2) A clear statement that the survivor has a right to have a sexual assault medical forensic examination, regardless of whether the survivor reports to or cooperates with law enforcement.

(3) The availability and contact information of a sexual assault advocate.

(4) The availability of protective orders, policies related to their enforcement, and the process to obtain protection orders.

(5) Policies regarding the storage, preservation, and disposal of sexual assault evidence collection kits.

(6) The process, if any, to request the preservation of sexual assault evidence collection kits.

(7) Instructions for requesting the test results upon the forensic or probative evidence of the kits from the investigating law enforcement agency.

(8) Information about state and federal compensation funds available for medical or other costs associated with the case and the availability of victim compensation and restitution.

Section 4. (a) The Attorney General shall establish the Sexual Assault Task Force. The task force shall develop, coordinate, and disseminate best practices regarding the care and treatment of sexual assault survivors and the preservation of forensic evidence.

(b) The task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two appointees selected by the Attorney General, with at least one appointee being a victim's rights advocate.

(2) Two appointees selected by the Governor.

(3) One appointee selected by the District Attorneys Association.

(4) One appointee selected by the Department of Forensic Sciences.

(5) One appointee selected by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.

(6) Three members of the Senate appointed by the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

(7) Three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

(8) One appointee selected by the Alabama Sheriffs Association.

(c) The appointing authorities shall coordinate their appointments to assure the task force membership is inclusive and reflects the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and economic diversity of the state.

(d) Task force members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for actual expenses associated with attending meetings by the respective appointing authorities according to applicable law.

(e) The task force shall consult with all of the following:

(1) Stakeholders in law enforcement, prosecution, forensic laboratory, counseling, forensic examiner, medical facility, and medical provider communities.

(2) Representatives of at least three entities with demonstrated expertise in sexual assault prevention, sexual assault advocacy, or representation of sexual assault victims, and at least one representative shall be a sexual assault victim.

(f) The task force shall have the following responsibilities specifically regarding the care and treatment of sexual assault survivors and preservation of evidence:

(1) Develop recommendations for improving the coordination of the dissemination and implementation of best

1 practices and protocols to hospital administrators,
2 physicians, forensic examiners, and other medical associations
3 and leaders in the medical community.

4 (2) Encourage, where appropriate, the adoption and
5 implementation of best practices and protocols among hospital
6 administrators, physicians, forensic examiners, and other
7 medical associations and leaders in the medical community.

8 (3) Develop recommendations to promote the
9 coordination of the dissemination and implementation of best
10 practices to the Attorney General, the Secretary of the
11 Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency, the Director of the
12 Department of Forensic Sciences, and other leaders in the law
13 enforcement community.

14 (4) Develop and implement, where practicable,
15 incentives to encourage the adoption or implementation of best
16 practices with the Attorney General, the Secretary of the
17 Alabama State Law Enforcement Agency, the Director of the
18 Department of Forensic Sciences, and other leaders in the law
19 enforcement community.

20 (5) Collect feedback from stakeholders,
21 practitioners, and leadership throughout law enforcement,
22 victim services, forensic science practitioners, and health
23 care communities to inform development of future best
24 practices or clinical guidelines.

25 (6) Perform other activities, such as activities
26 relating to development, dissemination, outreach, engagement,

1 or training associated with advancing victim-centered care for
2 sexual assault survivors.

3 (g) No later than two years after the effective date
4 of this act, the task force shall submit to the Attorney
5 General, the Legislature, and the Governor, a report
6 containing the findings and recommended actions of the task
7 force.

8 Section 5. This act shall become effective on the
9 first day of the third month following its passage and
10 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.