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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Kaul Testifies in Support of Legislation to Prevent Backlog of Sexual Assault Kits

MADISON, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Josh Kaul testified before the Senate Committee on Insurance, Financial Services, Government Oversight and Courts in support of [Senate Bill 200](#), legislation to help prevent a future backlog of untested sexual assault kits in Wisconsin.

The attorney general's written testimony is below and attached:

“Chairperson Craig, Vice-Chair Stroebel, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing today on Senate Bill 200 (Assembly Bill 214), legislation that seeks to prevent a future backlog of untested sexual assault kits in Wisconsin.

I would also like to thank Senators Cowles and Schachtner, Representatives Steffen and Sargent, and other members of the legislature who have supported this legislation; the members of the Attorney General's Sexual Assault Response Team, a multi-disciplinary group that played a large role in developing Senate Bill 200; and the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Wisconsin Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses, and the Wisconsin Nurses Association, all of which support this legislation.

In many sexual assault cases, evidence is obtained through a sexual assault forensic examination. In some cases, the testing of that evidence can result in the identification of the person who committed the sexual assault. Justice should never

be delayed because a sexual assault kit was not submitted—or because there was a lengthy delay before a kit was submitted—to the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories. Sexual assault is a serious violent crime, and the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases must be a priority.

If enacted, Senate Bill 200 will establish a statutory framework for the submission of sexual assault kits to the state crime labs and the retention of sexual assault kits.

Under this proposed legislation, when a health care professional collects a sexual assault kit and the survivor chooses to report the sexual assault to law enforcement or reporting is required, the health care professional must notify law enforcement within 24 hours after collecting the kit. The law enforcement agency would then have 72 hours to obtain the kit from the health care professional, and (unless the survivor notifies the agency that he or she does not want the kit to be tested) 14 days after that to send the kit to the state crime labs.

When a health care professional collects a sexual assault kit, the survivor chooses not to report to law enforcement, and reporting is not required, Senate Bill 200 requires the health care professional to send the kit to the state crime laboratories within 72 hours after collecting the kit. The kit would then be stored for 10 years or until the survivor decides to report the sexual assault to law enforcement.

Senate Bill 200 also would require the Wisconsin Department of Justice to collect information regarding sexual assault kits collected in Wisconsin.

Again, thank you for holding a hearing on this legislation. I am happy to answer any questions that members of the committee may have.”