

**First Regular Session  
Seventy-third General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO**

**REVISED**

*This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted  
on Second Reading in the Second House*

LLS NO. 21-0316.01 Michael Dohr x4347

**HOUSE BILL 21-1143**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

101 **CONCERNING FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE OF SEXUAL ASSAULT.**

**Bill Summary**

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

The bill requires the medical professional collecting the medical evidence to inform a victim of the contact information for the nearest sexual assault victim's advocate or confidential victim's advocate, the length of time that medical evidence must be preserved, and the victim's right to be notified of the destruction of the medical evidence.

The bill creates the following rights, upon request, for victims of a sex crime:

- The right to be notified that evidence has been submitted

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

SENATE  
2nd Reading Unamended  
April 27, 2021

HOUSE  
3rd Reading Unamended  
March 30, 2021

HOUSE  
Amended 2nd Reading  
March 29, 2021

- for testing;
- The right to be notified when the law enforcement agency has received the results of the analysis;
- The right to be informed of whether a DNA sample was obtained from the analysis and whether or not there are matches to DNA profiles in state or federal databases;
- The right to be informed at least 60 days prior to the destruction of forensic medical evidence collected in connection with the alleged sex offense;
- The right to file, prior to the expiration of the 60-day period, an objection to the destruction of the forensic medical evidence;
- The right to be informed of any change in status of the case, including if the case has been closed or reopened; and
- The right to receive a physical document identifying the rights under law after the exam has been completed.

The bill directs a law enforcement agency to maintain the medical evidence until the statute of limitation has run on the crime and for an additional 10 years if the victim objects to its destruction.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2           **SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general assembly  
3 finds and declares that:

4           (a) There has been a philosophical shift and accompanying  
5 statutory changes at the state and federal level regarding response to  
6 sexual assault victims. That shift acknowledges that providing  
7 victim-centered reporting options can:

8           (I) Begin to restore the power and control victims lose during an  
9 assault;

10           (II) Promote improved long-term outcomes for victims; and

11           (III) Improve investigations and lead to stronger prosecutions.

12           (b) In 2005, 42 U.S.C. sec. 3796gg-4 (b)(3) of the federal  
13 "Violence Against Women Act" made clear victims of sexual assault  
14 cannot be charged, directly or indirectly, for a medical forensic exam and

1 the associated testing of any evidence. The "Violence Against Women  
2 Act" also stated victims do not have to work with law enforcement to  
3 receive a medical forensic exam. Collectively, these provisions are known  
4 as forensic compliance.

5 (c) Through bills in 2008, 2013, and 2015, the state of Colorado  
6 came into compliance with the federal "Violence Against Women Act"  
7 forensic compliance provisions and created Colorado's current statutory  
8 structure that enables victims to determine a course of action with  
9 multidisciplinary responders acting from the victims' decisions. This  
10 included establishing the sexual assault victim emergency payment  
11 program, section 18-3-407.5 (3)(b), C.R.S., to pay for the evidence  
12 collection portion of the medical forensic exam collected pursuant to  
13 section 12-240-139 (1)(b), C.R.S.

14 (d) Victims of sexual assault who decide to undergo a medical  
15 forensic exam often experience frustration while waiting for the results  
16 of the DNA analysis. The process is lengthy and sometimes opaque, and  
17 currently there are no safeguards for victims to ensure they know the  
18 status or outcome of evidence testing. Communication about their  
19 evidence's progress is disparate and can leave victims feeling unsupported  
20 and forgotten.

21 (e) There are several survivor rights the state of Colorado should  
22 enshrine to ensure survivors are receiving the best possible care and  
23 response from the criminal justice system.

24 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 12-240-139, **add**  
25 (1)(b)(V) as follows:

26 **12-240-139. Injuries to be reported - penalty for failure to**  
27 **report - immunity from liability - definitions.** (1) (b) (V) A LICENSEE

1 OR NURSE WHO PERFORMS A MEDICAL FORENSIC EXAMINATION AS  
2 DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1)(b)(I) OF THIS SECTION SHALL INFORM THE  
3 VICTIM:

4 (A) OF THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NEAREST SEXUAL  
5 ASSAULT VICTIM'S ADVOCATE IF THE VICTIM MAKES A LAW ENFORCEMENT  
6 REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I)(A);

7 (B) OF THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NEAREST  
8 COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM ADVOCATE PURSUANT TO SECTION 13-90-107  
9 (1)(k)(II) IF THE VICTIM MAKES A MEDICAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION  
10 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I)(B) OR AN ANONYMOUS REPORT PURSUANT TO  
11 SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I)(C); AND

12 (C) THAT ANY FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE COLLECTED MUST BE  
13 MAINTAINED UNTIL AFTER THE ASSAILANT MAY NO LONGER BE  
14 PROSECUTED FOR THE CRIME AND THAT THE VICTIM MUST BE NOTIFIED  
15 PRIOR TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SUCH EVIDENCE.

16 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 12-255-133.5 as  
17 follows:

18 **12-255-133.5. Licensee duties related to medical forensic**  
19 **evidence.** (1) A LICENSEE WHO PERFORMS A MEDICAL FORENSIC  
20 EXAMINATION AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I) SHALL  
21 INFORM THE VICTIM:

22 (a) OF THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NEAREST SEXUAL  
23 ASSAULT VICTIM ADVOCATE IF THE VICTIM MAKES A LAW ENFORCEMENT  
24 REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I)(A);

25 (b) OF THE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NEAREST  
26 COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM ADVOCATE PURSUANT TO SECTION 13-90-107  
27 (1)(k)(II) IF THE VICTIM MAKES A MEDICAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION

1 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I)(B) OR AN ANONYMOUS REPORT PURSUANT TO  
2 SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I)(C); AND

3 (c) THAT ANY FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE COLLECTED MUST BE  
4 MAINTAINED UNTIL AFTER THE ASSAILANT MAY NO LONGER BE  
5 PROSECUTED FOR THE CRIME AND THAT THE VICTIM MUST BE NOTIFIED  
6 PRIOR TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SUCH EVIDENCE.

7 **SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-4.1-302.5, **add**  
8 (1)(b.8) as follows:

9 **24-4.1-302.5. Rights afforded to victims - definitions.** (1) In  
10 order to preserve and protect a victim's rights to justice and due process,  
11 each victim of a crime has the following rights:

12 (b.8) FOR A VICTIM WHO HAS HAD FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE  
13 COLLECTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b) THAT HAS NOT  
14 RESULTED IN A CONVICTION OR PLEA OF GUILTY, THE RIGHT TO BE  
15 NOTIFIED BY THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY WITH JURISDICTION FOR THE  
16 CASE, UPON REQUEST, OF THE STATUS AND LOCATION OF THE VICTIM'S  
17 FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE INCLUDING:

18 (I) THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED THAT THE FORENSIC MEDICAL  
19 EVIDENCE HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO AN ACCREDITED CRIME LAB FOR  
20 TESTING AS REQUIRED BY THE RULES PROMULGATED PURSUANT TO  
21 SECTION 24-33.5-113;

22 (II) THE RIGHT TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT  
23 AGENCY HAS RECEIVED THE RESULTS OF THE MEDICAL FORENSIC EVIDENCE  
24 DNA ANALYSIS FROM THE ACCREDITED CRIME LABORATORY;

25 (III) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF WHETHER A DNA SAMPLE  
26 WAS OBTAINED FROM THE ANALYSIS AND WHETHER OR NOT THERE ARE  
27 MATCHES TO DNA PROFILES IN STATE OR FEDERAL DATABASES;

1 (IV) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED AT LEAST SIXTY DAYS PRIOR TO  
2 THE DESTRUCTION OF FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE COLLECTED IN  
3 CONNECTION WITH THE ALLEGED SEX OFFENSE;

4 (V) THE RIGHT TO FILE, PRIOR TO THE EXPIRATION OF THE  
5 SIXTY-DAY PERIOD, AN OBJECTION WITH THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY,  
6 THE COLORADO BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, OR THE ACCREDITED CRIME  
7 LABORATORY THAT IS PROPOSING TO DESTROY THE FORENSIC MEDICAL  
8 EVIDENCE;

9 (VI) THE RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF ANY CHANGE IN STATUS OF  
10 THE CASE, INCLUDING IF THE CASE HAS BEEN CLOSED OR REOPENED; AND

11 (VII) THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE A PHYSICAL DOCUMENT IDENTIFYING  
12 THE RIGHTS UNDER LAW AFTER THE EXAM HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

13 **SECTION 5.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 24-4.1-303, **add**  
14 (14.9) as follows:

15 **24-4.1-303. Procedures for ensuring rights of victims of**  
16 **crimes.** (14.9) (a) IF, IN A CASE OF AN ALLEGED SEX OFFENSE THAT HAS  
17 NOT RESULTED IN A CONVICTION OR PLEA OF GUILTY OR WHEN A LAW  
18 ENFORCEMENT REPORT OR A MEDICAL REPORT IS FILED PURSUANT TO  
19 SECTION 12-240-139 (1)(b)(I), THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, THE  
20 COLORADO BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, OR THE ACCREDITED CRIME  
21 LABORATORY WITH CUSTODY OF FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE WANTS TO  
22 DESTROY THE EVIDENCE, IT SHALL NOTIFY THE VICTIM AT LEAST SIXTY  
23 DAYS PRIOR TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

24 (b) WHEN A VICTIM OBJECTS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF FORENSIC  
25 MEDICAL EVIDENCE AFTER RECEIVING NOTICE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION  
26 (14.9)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, THE  
27 COLORADO BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, OR THE ACCREDITED CRIME

1 LABORATORY SHALL RETAIN THE FORENSIC MEDICAL EVIDENCE FOR AN  
2 ADDITIONAL TEN YEARS.

3 **SECTION 6.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 18-3-407.5, **amend**  
4 (3)(c) as follows:

5 **18-3-407.5. Victim evidence - forensic evidence - electronic lie**  
6 **detector exam without victim's consent prohibited.** (3) (c) When  
7 personnel at a medical facility perform a medical forensic examination  
8 that includes the collection of evidence based on the request of a victim  
9 of a sexual offense and the medical facility performing the examination  
10 knows where the crime occurred, the facility shall contact the law  
11 enforcement agency in whose jurisdiction the crime occurred regarding  
12 preservation of the evidence. If the medical facility does not know where  
13 the crime occurred, the facility shall contact its local law enforcement  
14 agency regarding preservation of the evidence. Notwithstanding any other  
15 statutory requirements regarding storage of biological evidence, the law  
16 enforcement agency contacted by the medical facility shall retrieve the  
17 evidence from the facility and ~~store it for at least two years~~ MAINTAIN IT  
18 PURSUANT TO SECTION 18-1-1103, UNLESS A VICTIM OBJECTS TO ITS  
19 DESTRUCTION PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-4.1-303, IN WHICH CASE THE LAW  
20 ENFORCEMENT AGENCY MUST MAINTAIN IT FOR AN ADDITIONAL TEN  
21 YEARS.

22 **SECTION 7. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,  
23 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
24 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.