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Ending OC's Rape Kit Backlog: Supervisor Wagner and DA Spitzer Secure Funds to Help Survivors

(Santa Ana, Calif) January 28, 2020 – Today at the Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Don Wagner and District Attorney Todd Spitzer have committed to working together to clear a 30-year backlog of sexual assault kits.

“Because rape kit DNA testing can bring closure to the victims of these horrible crimes, we cannot accept continued delays when the resources are available to us,” said Supervisor Wagner. “The County is committed to ending the backlog, and I am ready to end the backlog. I thank District Attorney Todd Spitzer for his swift action in securing the funds to help make this important public safety measure a reality.”

As part of the solution, District Attorney Spitzer is bringing before the Board of Supervisors a contract with a third-party vendor for Sexual Assault Kit testing services for \$612,000; grant money that will assist in clearing about 50% of the gap. The contract is coming to the Board at its meeting scheduled on February 11. Following Supervisor Wagner’s direction and Board approval, DA Spitzer will revise the contract to include the \$400,000 in 14J funding as a solution to complete the entire backlog.

“Clearing the backlog of sexual assault kits has been a priority of mine since I was a County Supervisor, and I have doubled down on that commitment,” said District Attorney Spitzer. “The District Attorney’s Office is fully invested in getting these untested kits tested to provide these victims justice and a safer Orange County. I am pleased Supervisor Wagner requested the additional funds needed to close the backlog gap.”

“Ensuring public safety is a core function of government,” Wagner added. “Both DA Spitzer and I are dedicated to that principle. It does no good to have these rape kits aging on a shelf somewhere. They contain crucial information to solve yesterday’s crimes and to assist law enforcement in the prevention of future crimes.”

Public safety is critical to both Supervisor Wagner and DA Spitzer. Testing a rape kit is only the first step in the rung of justice. If you or a loved one is a victim of sexual assault, please do not shower or bathe as not to remove vital DNA evidence — immediately go to your nearest hospital.

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