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## **Governor Quinn Signs Laws to Protect Rights of Assault Victims**

### *Requires Processing of Evidence; Ensures Confidentiality*

CHICAGO – July 6, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn today signed two bills into law that will protect the rights of rape and sexual assault victims. The new laws address inconsistencies in the handling of sexual assault victims, and the confidentiality of statements made to rape counselors.

"We must do everything we can to make sure victims of sexual assault get the help they need to start down the road to recovery," said Governor Quinn. "Recovery requires protecting victims from their attackers, providing confidential treatment and ensuring that justice is served."

Senate Bill 3269, sponsored by Sen. Toi Hutchinson (D-Olympia Fields) and Rep. Emily McAsey (D-Lockport), creates the Sexual Assault Evidence Submissions Act and is the first law of its kind in the nation. Under the act, law enforcement agencies are required to submit evidence collected through a sexual assault criminal investigation to an Illinois State Police (ISP) laboratory, or a laboratory approved by ISP, within 10 business days.

The legislation is an initiative of Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan as a response to inconsistencies in the way sexual assaults are handled throughout Illinois. Police departments and prosecutors' offices often follow different policies for when and how quickly sexual assault evidence is submitted to laboratories for analysis. As a result, thousands of rape kits have not been analyzed.

"This law makes Illinois the first state in the nation to require rape kit testing, sending a strong message that law enforcement will pursue justice for children and women who are the primary victims of sexual assault," said Attorney General Madigan. "As a direct result of this law, we will increase the number of arrests and prosecutions of sex offenders and get them out of our communities and into prison, where they belong."

Governor Quinn also signed House Bill 5976, sponsored by former Rep. Julie Hamos (D-Evanston) and Sen. Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago). The law protects the confidentiality of statements made to rape crisis personnel. Under the new law, guardians of adult victims can access records with the victim's consent without waiving the confidentiality of those records. Adult victims with a guardian can waive confidentiality on their own without relying on a guardian. If the victim is incapable of waiving confidentiality, an adult guardian may waive the privilege for the victim unless the guardian has been charged with a violent crime against the victim or otherwise has an adverse interest. The legislation was an initiative of the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault in an effort to give adults with guardians the same privacy other victims receive.

Both bills passed the Illinois General Assembly unanimously. Governor Quinn signed the laws in Chicago. Senate Bill 3269 goes into effect Sept. 1, and House Bill 5976 goes into effect Jan. 1, 2011.