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## **Oregon, Connecticut and Utah Become Latest to Implement Full Rape Kit Reform**

NEW YORK – The Joyful Heart Foundation, a national organization working to end the backlog of untested kits nationwide, today announced that Connecticut, Oregon and Utah have become the latest states in the country to enact comprehensive rape kit reform. Each state has adopted the [six pillars of reform](#) recommended by Joyful Heart and leaders in this field.

“Behind every kit is a person—a sexual assault survivor—waiting for justice,” said Ilse Knecht, Director of Policy & Advocacy for Joyful Heart. “The rape kit backlog represents a failure of the criminal justice system to protect survivors and hold perpetrators accountable. We can and must do better. When jurisdictions test every kit, they solve crimes, bring answers and a path to justice for survivors, take criminals off the streets, and exonerate the innocent.”

“We thank the elected leaders of Connecticut, Oregon and Utah who remained committed to seeing full rape kit reform implemented in their state. We will continue to serve as a resource for state officials as they work to ensure that an untested rape kit backlog never again occurs in their states,” added Knecht.

DNA evidence is an invaluable investigative tool. Yet too often, the decision is made not to test sexual assault kits. Some officials actively choose not to test all rape kits because they fail to see the value of testing every kit, despite best practices and federally recommended protocols. Still others fail to treat sexual assault as the serious crime that it is.

Testing all rape kits not only makes communities safer, it can also save [millions of dollars](#). According to researchers from Case Western Reserve University, testing just 4,300 previously unsubmitted kits in Cleveland saved \$38.7 million, or \$8,893 per tested sexual assault kit.

But testing rape kits is just the first step to comprehensive reform. Once the problem is acknowledged and initial kits are sent for testing, jurisdictions must grapple with the enormous task of finding a way to test all rape kits in their storage facilities, investigate and prosecute these cases, re-engage survivors in the process, and address any systemic failures that led to the backlog in the first place.

[Connecticut](#), [Oregon](#) and [Utah](#) have enacted policies to: test all new and backlogged sexual assault kits; conduct quarterly audits of kits in law enforcement custody; track all kits; and provide survivors with access to information about the status of their kit. They have also funded these efforts with a state investment, which may be combined with federal grant dollars. Together, these laws will eliminate the backlog of untested kits, prevent future backlogs, support survivors, and help transform law enforcement’s response to sexual assault.

Joyful Heart has created the premier national resource about the rape kit backlog, which includes an interactive map and resources for survivors, legislators, and the media. Learn more at: [ENDTHEBACKLOG.org](http://ENDTHEBACKLOG.org).

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*The mission of the Joyful Heart Foundation is to transform society’s response to sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse, support survivors’ healing, and end this violence forever.*

[www.joyfulheartfoundation.org](http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org)