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**Heller’s Efforts Help Las Vegas Police Reduce Rape Kit Backlog**

 **WASHINGTON**– U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), who has co-authored and championed legislation to reduce the state’s rape kit backlog, today applauded reports that the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) is expected to clear a backlog of sexual assault kits within a year.

Kim Murga, LVMPD’s DNA laboratory director, said that “We have a very aggressive testing schedule, and we’ve been fortunate enough to finally have the money we need to move forward with this process,” according to the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](https://www.reviewjournal.com/crime/sex-crimes/las-vegas-police-expect-to-clear-rape-kit-backlog-within-a-year/).

Heller has championed several policies and fought for federal funding to combat the state’s rape kit backlog, including programs to support lab operations for DNA analysis, and implement an evidence based program to audit, track, and report untested sexual assault kits. Additionally, earlier this year, [President Trump signed into law a bipartisan bill Heller introduced](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=22188F0C-BA3C-40AC-B54A-4F03E5F45374) called the [Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AC843F36-1234-4CB6-BC03-173239BDD647) that reauthorizes, strengthens, and extends the SAFER program in an effort to reduce the nationwide rape kit backlog.

“The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department is making great strides to deliver justice for victims and hold perpetrators accountable for their violent crimes. Victims of sexual assault deserve swift justice and nothing less,” **said Heller.** “I’m proud of the work LVMPD is doing, and that’s why I’m pushing for more federal support so Nevada law enforcement can continue to cut down on the backlog of untested rape kits and ensure critical evidence isn’t left collecting dust. As a strong supporter and author of proposals to crack down on these horrific crimes and aid victims on a path to recovery and restoration, I’m hopeful the U.S. Senate will swiftly pass the Debbie Smith Crime Victims Protection Act so our state can continue to build on this commendable progress.”

The news comes as Heller recently announced that he introduced the [Debbie Smith Crime Victims Protection Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/heller-cornyn-feinstein-klobuchar-introduce-the-debbie-smith-crime-victims-protection-act),legislation to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Actand dedicate much-needed resources to state and local law enforcement agencies to conduct forensic analyses, including untested rape kits.

**Background on Heller’s bills to zero out Nevada’s rape kit backlog:**

* Heller co-authored the [Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AC843F36-1234-4CB6-BC03-173239BDD647), [Public Law No: 115-107](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=22188F0C-BA3C-40AC-B54A-4F03E5F45374), which reauthorizes, strengthens, and extends the SAFER program in an effort to reduce the nationwide rape kit backlog.
* Heller co-authored the [Debbie Smith Crime Victims Protection Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/heller-cornyn-feinstein-klobuchar-introduce-the-debbie-smith-crime-victims-protection-act),legislation to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Actand dedicate much-needed resources to state and local law enforcement agencies to conduct forensic analyses of crime scenes, including untested rape kits.
* Heller co-authored [the Justice Served Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/1/heller-cosponsors-bill-to-help-prosecute-sex-offenders-rapists-and-other-criminals-in-dna-cold-cases), which would provide funds to prosecute the rape kit backlog and justice for victims of crimes like sexual assault by resolving cold cases and exonerating those wrongfully convicted of crimes they did not commit.

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