

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE OKS OUTSIDE DNA TESTING

Posted on March 7, 2018 by Tyler Barker



DNA TESTING

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) - West Virginia's Legislature has unanimously approved legislation intended to speed processing of DNA lab testing by authorizing the State Police to use outside contractors for criminal identification including rape kits.

The Senate-approved bill, which passed the House 97-0 on Wednesday, would give the Marshall University Forensic Science Center the first opportunity to do the work.

It authorizes the state's Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Commission to establish timelines for handling rape kits collected by health care providers.

The average time for processing rape kits is now 440 days.

It authorizes correctional authorities to use "reasonable force" to get DNA samples from felons who decline to provide saliva swabs.

Their information is collected for the state database, where it can be matched against DNA taken from victims of rape and other crimes.