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POLS 1100

Term essay

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Rape kit backlog.

**SAKI Sexual Assault Kit Initiative**

The legislator awarded our state with a grant to cover an issue that became extremely common throughout the US. The question raised from sexual assault kits that were left untested. These untested kits are known as backlog. This became a huge issue that became extremely controversial. Rightfully so, the people involved in the kit had gone through extreme traumatic situations and put trust in authorities to keep them safe and give them a peace of mind and justice. Authorities involved intend to provide that sense of peace and trust. But behind it, all was a foundation that just was not equipped to sustain the goals and outcomes everyone had hoped for.

When the situation got to the point of turmoil, legislators had a responsibility to withstand/ uphold, a mess that needed tending to. After comprehending the dilemma and the effect the issue had on the states, the Legislature created the grant funding a program they called Sexual Assault Kit Initiative.

The program brought hope to people who were victimized by their experiences and the people who wanted to bring justice to that community. The catch I feel was the excitement of finding a solution, a resolution to a huge impactful problem. The glitch that was overlooked was significant for the success of the initial goal.

This particular issue sparked my interest because of my current role as an Advocate for victims of crime. My role as an advocate has placed me in the center of it all. The center because, as an advocate of victims of crime, we have a goal and or policy to provide support, resources information to the victims. Once agencies were rewarded funded the grant money, they were given a set of expectations that they were expected to achieve.

These expectations were valuable but not realistic. The reason being is because the funding needed compared to the funding given was a significant deficiency that made clear the precedent and inadequacy of the expected goal. The main issue is the implication betrayed by the legislators about the program was not reality. The insinuated that with the help of the funding and new program, the solution was feasible. But it was not. Legislators appeared to produce a way to protect themselves and save money in the process.

 Initially, throughout the US, individual states were allocating grantees for funding and creating SAKI teams to complete the goals of processing kits by deadlines and show the success of the funding given. I do not feel that the given deadlines nor the goals were looked at practically with the amount of funds that were given. When clearing an issue as big as this particular situation, Legislators should not look for just the quickest solution. The quick fix” These quick fixes have the potential to cause a lot of harm not only in society, but it also causes issues between agencies, media and most importantly the victims who already suffer. It creates assumptions and misunderstanding from the community.

Once the kits started to process, things began to look extremely well, The media was excited to report, and legislators felt proud of their efforts and presumed to give the public the assumption of what to expect from SAKI program, which was not realistic. Whether lack of knowledge, lack of funds, or lack of priority. Legislators should not exaggerate achievement outcomes that have not been fully equipped to be achievable. The backlash after the excitement from victims who may have just begun to feel hopeful, who just started to rebuild trust in the system, was once again disappointed. Disappointed that even after all the time they had already waited, having to relive the traumatic event, they still were left waiting with no clear answer to the status of their kit and left with no security that their perpetrator would not harm them or anybody again.

Why? Because without the proper funding, the process that takes place to submit the kits takes an excessive amount of time. The time that, if properly funded, kits would be processed in a timely manner with the help of additional needs to do so. Because most labs were equipped to handle average daily processing and not the overstock that they received, it caused major adjustment, frustration, and conflict. Why did Legislators think this was the way to the solution? Going back to the original goal to keep the community safe and criminals off the street. But with the backlog of unprocessed kits, we do not meet the goal. Because of the unprocessed kit, the criminals are left unprosecuted and remain a huge threat to the community and the victim.

This is how perpetrators become what we call serial offenders. This initiative from legislators should have been better prepared. Despite the picture that was painted for the public. I see now that this issue is not isolated toward just this topic of interest; it has happened with other areas of interest. Between government spending, and social justice, there is a cultural bias regardless of intent that prevents our legislators from comprehending the need to provide a strong foundation and a support system for initiatives that positively contribute to our society.

 The best way to overcome issues is to learn why when who and where. When an issue becomes so big, it should not be left unattended, forgotten, or unevaluated. I would like for legislators to be proactive in the processes. Communication, education, will help to have a better understanding of the needs that are requested. In return, the outcome becomes successful, and not recurrent

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