



April 8, 2015

Honorable Members of Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate

Re: Letter of Support for H.R. 320

Dear Honorable Member of Congress:

I am writing to ask that you consider supporting the passage of H.R. 320, *The Rapid DNA Act of 2015*. This important legislation will establish a system for the integration of Rapid DNA instruments for use by law enforcement.

As a sexual assault survivor, the founder of H-E-A-R-T (Hope Exists after Rape Trauma), and a longtime advocate for the elimination of DNA testing backlogs, I strongly support reforming current law to enable rapid processing of arrestee DNA samples to help get violent criminals off the street sooner, and exonerating the innocent as quickly as possible.

Too often, laboratories tasked with processing DNA samples and rape kits are overworked and under-resourced, creating a seemingly insurmountable backlog in processing rape kits and DNA samples. Not only is Rapid DNA an effective tool for law enforcement to quickly identify arrestees and offenders, it could significantly aid in reducing these current backlogs. Rapid DNA implementation can free up valuable resources at these laboratories to focus on more complicated rape kit analysis.

H.R. 320 will enable law enforcement to use the most efficient means available to reduce the backlog in rape kit processing and DNA sample analysis generally. Many violent crimes could likely have been prevented through efficient processing of rape kits and implementation of Rapid DNA

analysis, a technology which is now approved by the FBI for use in accredited public forensic laboratories. It is our understanding that some local law enforcement entities are now also using Rapid DNA technology for confirmatory testing of suspects identified from processing rape kits at forensic labs, to further expedite rape kit processing.

Unlike traditional DNA analysis, which can take weeks as samples must be sent to and analyzed by a laboratory, Rapid DNA analysis permits processing of DNA samples using a non-laboratory based machine in approximately 90 minutes or less. This technology has the potential to revolutionize the way in which arrested individuals are enrolled in the criminal justice system and the speed with which their DNA can be linked to unsolved crimes. To accomplish this goal, law enforcement using Rapid DNA must be able to access our nationwide system of DNA profiles, CODIS.

Unfortunately, current law only allows accredited laboratories to utilize CODIS. H.R. 320 would correct this and allow law enforcement officers around the country to use a Rapid DNA system to compare DNA samples collected at the time of arrest to profiles in CODIS, thereby quickly identifying suspects linked to previous crimes and exonerating the innocent. The bill also would require the FBI to adopt quality assurance standards, which would include training standards, to standardize the use of Rapid DNA systems by law enforcement and audit standards to make certain these systems are properly used by qualified personnel under appropriate oversight, policies, and regulations.

My hope is that my support, and that of my organization, will demonstrate the overwhelming importance of permitting law enforcement to use Rapid DNA instruments. Please feel free to contact me anytime at 804-829-2981 if you would like to discuss further.

From my heart,



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Debbie Smith  
Founder, H-E-A-R-T, Inc.