



## NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

**June 12, 2020**

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### **Senator Hennessey Leads New Hampshire Senate's Efforts to Advance Protections for Sexual Assault Victim-Survivors**

**CONCORD** - Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed Amendment #1305s to HB 705, a sexual assault omnibus bill, sponsored by Senate Judiciary Chair Martha Hennessey (D-Hanover).

**After the committee vote, Senate Judiciary Chair Martha Hennessey (D-Hanover) issued the following statement:**

"Throughout the COVID crisis, we have heard that we are safer at home. We have all taken the steps to self-isolate and socially distance in order to protect public health. However, for victims of domestic and sexual violence this has taken away outlets for reporting and endangered their personal safety. Recent reports indicate a possible 30% increase in cases of domestic and sexual violence as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

As a state, we are committed to the protection of our victims and survivors--this work was and continues to be a critical bipartisan priority. I'm honored to have brought forward this package of legislation to make New Hampshire safer and more just for all. This bill improves education on sexual misconduct at our colleges and universities, removes statutes of limitations for sexual assault so survivors are not silenced or denied justice, and bans the sale of diy rape kits that could be dismissed in court and don't provide the comprehensive, critical care victim-survivors need and deserve.

An abuser's power comes from their ability to isolate their victim. It is our duty to make sure victims of sexual assault know that they have pathways to justice and they are not alone. Not now. Not ever."

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### **On Background:**

- Amendment #1305s to HB 705 includes language from the following bills:
  - SB 508 *extending the statute of limitations for civil actions based on a sexual assault*

- SB 679 *requiring institutions of higher education to adopt policies on sexual misconduct*
- HB 1601 *removing the exception for married minors from the definition of sexual assault*
- HB 1495 *prohibiting the sale of over-the-counter rape test kits*
- HB 705 *relative to the rights of victims of crime, increasing the cap on assistance for victims of crime, and establishing a committee to study the needs of crime victims and enforcement of statutes governing crime victims' rights*