Survivors of Abuse New Jersey Applauds Expansion of Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights

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MT. LAUREL, NJ - April 21, 2025 -
Newark, NJ ? Joseph L. Messa, Jr. commends the recent legislative advancements in New Jersey that strengthen the rights of sexual assault survivors. In September 2024, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law a bipartisan bill that expands the Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights, enhancing transparency and support for survivors throughout the criminal justice process. This expansion provides much-needed reforms that ensure survivors receive timely updates and have greater access to critical information regarding their cases.

The new legislation mandates that survivors be informed of critical developments in their cases, including:

- Notification if a DNA profile of an assailant is obtained during evidence processing.

- Information on whether the DNA profile has been entered into a database used for retaining or comparing case evidence.

- Updates if there is a match between the assailant's DNA profile and another profile in any database used for evidence comparison.

- Details on the submission of sexual assault evidence to forensic laboratories and the results of any comparisons.

Additionally, at the survivor's request, law enforcement agencies are now required to provide updates on the status of all evidence collected. Survivors may also designate another individual to receive this information on their behalf, ensuring that they have access to essential case developments in a way that suits their personal needs and comfort.

"This legislation represents a significant step forward in supporting survivors of sexual assault," said Messa.

"By ensuring that survivors are kept informed about the progress of their cases, we are fostering a more transparent and supportive justice system. Survivors deserve to be heard, respected, and kept in the loop about the developments that directly impact their pursuit of justice."

The expansion of the Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights builds upon the foundation established in 2019, which outlined basic protections and fundamental rights for sexual assault survivors in NJ. These rights include:

- The assurance that all allegations are treated with dignity and compassion.

- The right to be informed of all legal proceedings related to their case.

- The ability to receive updates about their case?s progress without unnecessary delays.

- Protections against unnecessary or invasive inquiries that could retraumatize the survivor during the legal process.

With these new provisions, New Jersey is further ensuring that survivors of sexual assault have a more survivor-centered experience within the justice system. The enhanced rights give survivors a stronger voice and greater agency over how their cases are handled.

Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin emphasized the importance of this legislation, stating, "With this critical legislation, Governor Murphy and the Legislature are not only increasing our chances of successfully prosecuting sexual violence offenders, but they are also ensuring that survivors receive the respect and transparency they deserve. We must continue working to provide survivors with every possible avenue to achieve justice and healing."

Joseph L. Messa, Jr., is dedicated to providing legal advocacy for survivors of sexual abuse and assault in New Jersey. The firm remains committed to ensuring that survivors understand their rights and legal options, including seeking civil justice against perpetrators and institutions that enabled abuse. With this new legislation in place, survivors in New Jersey have an even stronger foundation to seek the justice and closure they deserve.

The firm specializes in representing survivors of sexual abuse, including those affected by institutional negligence. With a compassionate approach and extensive experience, the firm strives to empower survivors through legal advocacy and support. For survivors looking for legal guidance, Joseph L. Messa, Jr. offers free and confidential consultations to discuss available legal options.

Just simply visit https://survivorsofabusenj.com/.

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