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## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3214

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The Honorable Darrell Issa  
Chairman  
Oversight and Government Reform Committee  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Issa,

I write to urge a timely hearing on the national backlog of DNA rape evidence samples that have not been tested. Since 2004, millions of dollars in funding have been appropriated under the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program. Efforts to eliminate the national backlog of rape evidence samples that have not been tested for DNA have been slowed or stymied by the lack of solid data on the extent and nature of the remaining backlog. While there is extensive evidence that we are making progress towards eliminating the backlog, policy makers lack a reliable estimate of the number of kits awaiting testing, or even how many kits remain at each stage of the process (in police custody, at labs awaiting processing, etc.).

I soon plan to reintroduce bipartisan legislation, the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Registry (SAFER) Act (H.R. 6085 in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress). This legislation addresses these issues by creating an incentive grant program to provide funding to cover the upfront costs of auditing state and local jurisdictions backlogs of DNA rape evidence samples, using existing Debbie Smith program funds. The bill would also direct the Justice Department to create the National Rape Kit Registry, a simple database that will track the status of every rape evidence kit waiting to be processed.

I have been working on the issue of DNA technology since 2001 when I, along with former Chairman Steve Horn, held a hearing in the Government Reform Committee where we heard from a courageous rape survivor, Debbie Smith. It was for Debbie, and the thousands of rape survivors like her, that I authored "The Debbie Smith Act" to provide federal funding to process the unconscionable backlog of DNA evidence. This legislation passed as part of the Justice for All Act of 2004, authorizing the necessary funding to start processing the backlog through the creation of the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program. Not only is this important for those victims but also to honor the legacy of our friend and colleague, Chairman Horn.

The human cost of our nation's broken DNA processing system increases daily, and I believe this legislation would address many of the problems that result in the delay and denial of justice. I look forward to working with you to ensure that perpetrators of sexual assaults are held accountable for their heinous crimes and victims receive the justice they deserve.

Sincerely,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress