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For Immediate Release - Senator Joyce Waddell's Education Law Changes and Sexual Assault Kit Tracking

Jyrita Moore (Sen. Joyce Waddell) [Waddelljla@ncleg.net]

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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 15, 2018

CONTACT: Sen. Joyce Waddell
(919) 733-5650
Joyce.Waddell@ncleg.net

Education Law Changes and Sexual Assault Kit Tracking

Charlotte, NC – House Bill 986, Various Changes to Education Laws, has cleared the Senate and House this week. The bill deals with various changes to education law in the state of North Carolina. It requires the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to study and make recommendations to the legislature on ways to reduce K-12 testing not required by state or federal law by January 15, 2019. It also authorizes school districts within the state to report on how they teach cursive writing and multiplication annually to the General Assembly. The Department of Public Instruction would be required to develop content standard for a mental health training program and minimum requirements for a suicide risk referral program. In addition, this legislation creates more access to advanced math courses for students in under-resourced districts. Students who score a level five on end-of-year math tests would be required to be placed in advanced math courses the following year. The bill has been sent to the Governor for his signature.

House Bill 945, Rape Evidence Collection Kit Tracking Act, establishes a tracking system of sexual assault evidence collection kits. The legislation reduces the amount of untested sexual assault evidence collection kits in the state of North Carolina. It allows the purchase of sexual assault kits, rather than rape kits, to broaden the scope of victims assisted. Also, kits purchased or distributed on or after October 1, 2018, would be required to be compatible with the tracking system. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Crime Lab has roughly 200 untested kits. Attorney General Josh Stein says that the number statewide for untested kits is closer to 15,000. The bill allows victims of sexual assault to track the location and status of their kit and untested kits. The Director of the Crime Lab would be required to give an annual report to the General Assembly. House Bill 945 passed the Senate and House and has been sent to the Governor.

“As a former educator, I support creating more opportunities for low-income students to have access to advanced courses in mathematics and increase their knowledge in such a valuable field. Also, as a legislator, it is important to advocate for victims of sexual assault to receive the justice they deserve and implement systems to decrease the amount of unused sexual assault evidence collection kits,” said Senator Joyce Waddell.

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