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AUDITOR GENERAL

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Auditor General DePasquale Says Legislature, Governor Must Do More to Help Protect Children, Rape Victims

Calls for more funding to fix child services system, eliminate rape kit backlog

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today issued the following statement as the legislature begins work on the state’s 2018-19 budget:

“This week, I am meeting with children and youth workers in two more counties. In every county I visit, I am finding hard-working, dedicated people who are committed to protecting vulnerable children. Unfortunately, these caseworkers face wholesale system breakdowns that actually prevent them from protecting children from abuse and neglect.

“My search for solutions to help fix the state’s broken child-welfare system will culminate in an action plan to be presented this spring to the General Assembly and governor. We must keep this issue on the budget radar so that we are prepared to do everything possible to protect children.

“At the same time, Pennsylvania has a backlog of at least 1,214 rape kits sitting on shelves awaiting testing. We know from other states that have tested their backlog of rape kits that testing can lead to identifying criminals.

“At least 13 other states have already provided funding to eliminate their backlogged rape kits. It is time that Pennsylvania provide the funding necessary to clear the backlog and finally provide sexual assault victims with a chance for justice.”

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EDITOR’S NOTES:

- In September 2016, DePasquale released a [special report on the state’s untested rape kits](#) that found inadequate communication to local law enforcement agencies, errors in DOH’s official 2015 report and resource shortages that could be leading to delayed justice for victims. The 67-page special report featured three observations and 10 recommendations.
- Auditor General DePasquale is visiting county child-welfare agencies as a follow-up to his 80-page [“State of the Child”](#) special report, which found that Pennsylvania’s child-welfare system is broken.