



San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott

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City Attorney Renews Call For City to Test Every Rape Kit

In advance of Denim Day on Wednesday, City Attorney Mara W. Elliott today renewed her call for the City to enact a policy of testing every rape kit for DNA evidence and sharing that evidence with other jurisdictions.

San Diego was among a number of California cities identified in a 2014 state audit as having a large backlog of untested rape kits. Since then, several of those cities adopted policies requiring every kit to be tested. San Diego did not, and last year the San Diego Union-Tribune reported that roughly 2,400 sexual-assault kits still have not been sent to the crime lab for testing.

That number has now grown to 2,873. In contrast, Los Angeles has cleared its backlog and has no untested rape kits.

Elliott said that while rape-kit analysis may not always advance an individual investigation, analysis may yield a DNA match that can benefit other investigations and resolve cold cases.

DNA evidence in active cases can be shared by law-enforcement agencies throughout the state through the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).

“When rape victims submit to an ordeal that can take up to four hours, the evidence they provide should be fully analyzed and shared for maximum value in solving crimes and preventing future crimes,” Elliott said. **“Other cities test every kit. San Diego should test every kit.”**

The Denim Day campaign has been held every April for the past 18 years as part of Sexual Violence Awareness Month.

Its organizers based the campaign on an Italian Supreme Court decision overturning a rape conviction because the victim was wearing tight jeans. The justices felt that the victim must have helped her rapist remove her jeans, and so gave her consent. The next day, the women in the Italian Parliament wore jeans to work in solidarity with the victim.

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