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S.B. 198
134th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Sen. Antonio

Ashley F. Dean, Attorney

SUMMARY

- Eliminates the period of limitation for prosecuting rape or a conspiracy or attempt to commit, or complicity in committing, rape.
- Requires biological evidence related to the investigation or prosecution of a rape or attempted rape to be preserved for as long as the offense remains unsolved.
- States that there is no period of limitations for a civil action brought by a victim of conduct that would constitute rape or conduct that would constitute conspiracy to commit, complicity in committing, or attempting to commit rape against the person who committed that conduct.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Statute of limitations for rape

The bill eliminates the period of limitation for prosecuting rape or a conspiracy or attempt to commit, or complicity in committing, rape. Currently, subject to the exceptions described below, a prosecution for rape or a conspiracy or attempt to commit, or complicity in committing, rape is barred unless it is commenced within 25 years after the offense was committed. However, if a DNA record made in connection with the investigation of a rape is determined to match another DNA record of an identifiable person, one of the following periods of limitation applies:¹

1. If the DNA match is determined later than 25 years after the offense was committed, prosecution may commence within five years after the DNA match.

¹ R.C. 2901.13(A)(2) and (4) and (D).

2. If the DNA match is determined within 25 years after the offense was committed, prosecution may commence within 25 years of the offense or five years after the DNA match, whichever is later.

Preservation of biological evidence

The bill requires any law enforcement agency, prosecutor's office, court, public hospital, crime laboratory, or other governmental or public entity or individual that is charged with the collection, storage, or retrieval of biological evidence ("government evidence-retention entity"), or an official or employee of any of those entities and individuals, to secure biological evidence in relation to a rape or attempted rape for as long as the offense or delinquent act remains unsolved. Currently, a government evidence-retention entity must secure biological evidence of rape or attempted rape for 30 years if the offense or act remains unsolved.²

"Biological evidence" is defined in existing law as the contents of a sexual assault examination kit, or any item that contains biological material that was collected as part of a criminal investigation or delinquent child investigation and that reasonably may be used to incriminate or exculpate any person for an offense or delinquent act.³

As under current law, if an individual is convicted of or pleads guilty to the offense, or is adjudicated a delinquent child for committing the delinquent act, the evidence must be secured until the earlier of either 30 years or the expiration of the latest of the period of time for which the offender is incarcerated, is in a Department of Youth Services institution or other juvenile facility, is under a community control sanction or supervised release for that offense, is involved in civil litigation related to the offense or act, or is subject to the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Law. If a person remains incarcerated after 30 years, the government evidence-retention entity must secure the biological evidence until the person is released from incarceration or dies.⁴

No limitations for civil actions for rape victims

The bill states that notwithstanding any other section of the Revised Code to the contrary, there is no period of limitations for a civil action brought by a victim of conduct that would constitute rape or conduct that would constitute conspiracy to commit, complicity in committing, or attempting to commit rape against the person who committed that conduct.⁵

² R.C. 2933.82(B)(1)(a) and (b).

³ R.C. 2933.82(A)(1).

⁴ R.C. 2933.82(B)(1)(c).

⁵ R.C. 2305.118.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	06-16-21
