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Travis Co. DA says more sexual assault cases maki it to jury trials

By Jennifer Kendall, FOX 7 Austin | Published July 31, 2019 9:27pm CDT | News | FOX 7 Austin |

AUSTIN, Texas (FOX 7 Austin) - The Travis County District Attorney said the number of adult sexual assault jury trials has been increasing since 2017.

"We have received more cases from law enforcement, we have returned more indictments, we have tried more jury trials, so we are getting the job done," saic Travis County District Attorney Margaret Moore.

Prosecutors and law enforcement in the county have faced criticism from survivors and advocates who feel the system failed to prioritize cases. That criticism came after reports of rape kit backlogs, misclassified sexual assault cases, and statistics showing only one sex assault case actually made it to a jur trial in 2017.

Moore said there were several factors that played into that.

"2017 was just after the APD DNA lab closed, and we had to go through a substantial amount of re-examining our cases, submitting evidence for re-testi during that year, so we did not get to an actual jury trial until the end of the yea

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That number doesn't tell the whole story either, according to Moore, because r every case goes before a jury.

“In that same year, we did obtain a finding of guilt in sexual assault cases in 37 cases. We had over 70 indictments returned that year,” Moore said.

Either way, Moore said her office has added resources and is prioritizing prosecuting adult sexual assault cases.

“Since I took office, we have obtained a finding of guilt in 111 cases,” said Moore

In a statement, SAFE Alliance writes:

Moore said the idea that her office and the police department don't take sexua assault cases seriously is not only wrong, but could also discourage other survivors from coming forward.

“Please report these cases. Please don't believe the people who are telling you the system doesn't care about you. We all care,” Moore said.

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