



## STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Natasha's Justice Project Cites Texas Commitment to "Break the Backlog"** *State Appropriates Funds to Eliminate Its Current Rape Kit Backlog;* *"Demonstrates Significant Step in Effort to Eradicate the National Backlog"*

**West Sayville, NY** (August 6, 2013) – Natasha Alexenko, founder of Natasha's Justice Project (NJP), today released the following statement regarding Texas' appropriation earmarked for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to analyze collected, but untested, rape kits.

"Texas has taken a huge step toward eliminating what the state DPS estimates may be as many as a 20,000 untested rape kits. The importance of resolving the backlog is clear – DPS estimates that as many as half of the kits will provide evidence that could be used to solve crimes – and the state government should be applauded for giving this a significant place in its budget priorities.

"There are many obstacles to eliminating the nationwide rape kit backlog that are not limited to funding and overworked crime labs. Natasha's Justice Project is working through a number of programs to continue to draw attention to the need to eliminate the backlog and has developed pilot program efforts to provide resources and identify approaches that can be shared with other jurisdictions. Texas' action of itself should serve as a sterling example of a jurisdiction resolving to take concrete action that we hope other states will emulate."

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Natasha's Justice Project ([www.natashasjusticeproject.org](http://www.natashasjusticeproject.org)) is a 501(c)(3) organization created to empower survivors of sexual assault by identifying and eliminating the nation's rape kit backlog. Natasha's Justice Project is named for its founder and sexual assault survivor Natasha Alexenko, whose story was recently featured on HBO's critically acclaimed documentary *Sex Crimes Unit*. Natasha has been featured on CNN, in *The New York Times*, Associated Press and the *Washington Post*, among others.