

Dear (fill in Member of Congress)

I am writing you to urgently request assistance for the State and Local Forensic Service Provider Community. Specifically, we are asking you to please fund the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Grant at the full \$35 million that the program is authorized for.

The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science grants are the only funds that provide the state and local forensic community a source of funding for over 90% of the disciplines within the crime lab community. They are also the only funds available for the medical examiner/coroner community. You may not be aware, but the amount of physical evidence submitted to the nation's crime labs is increasing at a rapid pace, especially in the controlled substances, digital evidence, and toxicology disciplines. Because we lack the capacity to process the amount of evidence we are currently being presented with, we are struggling to process all of it not only in a timely a manner but more importantly within the timelines authorized by the court system allowing for the dismissal of charges in some cases. Given our current struggles, the loss of Coverdell grant funding would set our country's crime labs and medical examiners offices back even further thereby affecting our court systems.

In addition to backlog reduction efforts, Coverdell funding is used for training in the forensic service provider community. In the last few years, budgets have decreased and training funds have been cut. Crime laboratories must have the ability to send employees to training in order to stay current with the latest technology and research. Without this much needed funding, new technology and research will not be disseminated down to the bench level and will not be incorporated into crime labs. Additionally, training hours are a requirement of many existing forensic examiner certification programs. Without supplemental funding like that provided by the Coverdell program, crime labs will never be able to achieve the goal of maintaining certification for all analysts.

Here at (YOUR CRIME LAB/ME), (PROVIDE INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO YOU ON HOW COVERDELL HELPED).

Thank you for your consideration and if you have any questions please contact me at ...