



*American Academy of Forensic Sciences  
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors  
International Association for Identification  
International Association of Forensic Nurses  
National Association of Medical Examiners Society  
of Forensic Toxicologists/  
American Board of Forensic Toxicology*

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release: May 20, 2015

### **The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations Applauds U.S. Senate for Hearing on Unsubmitted Sexual Assault Collection Kits**

WASHINGTON DC - The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations applauds the United States Senate for hearing testimony on "Taking Sexual Assault Seriously: The Rape Kit Backlog and Human Rights" on May 20, 2015 and urges Congress for federal funding to be applied to all forensic science disciplines.

The Consortium applauds the Senate Judiciary Committee for their continued commitment to the matter of unsubmitted sexual assault collection kits. While approaches have varied widely across the nation, many states have begun to aggressively address the unsubmitted collection kit matter. The Consortium members are pleased that many states are self-reporting a confirmed number of unsubmitted kits (kits that have never been submitted to a forensic science laboratory for processing). States including California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Texas, and Utah are a few that have significantly addressed or have finished processing all known kits. Many laboratories have developed or validated new processes to efficiently address the influx of new sexual assault kit submissions. Those jurisdictions that have self reported to national interest group websites indicate that there are fewer than 60,000 confirmed kits that currently exist in the U.S. The Consortium estimates the actual number of unsubmitted kits in the U.S. is higher than 60,000 kits, but is not anywhere near the 400,000 kits estimated by some individuals due to the large number of states and jurisdictions already engaged in resolving this issue.

The Consortium urges Congress to be mindful that while thousands of cases have been solved using the much-appreciated federal DNA funds, those funds must continue to keep up the increasing demands for service to prevent future backlogs. It is also

important to understand that DNA is only one part of a sexual assault investigation. Laboratories are often asked to perform analysis in the toxicology, latent print, firearm, microanalysis/trace analysis, and controlled substances disciplines in connection with sexual assault investigations. Federal funding in these “non-DNA disciplines” has not kept pace with the requests for analysis. Not only have the requests for analysis increased in regards to sexual assault investigations in these “non-DNA disciplines,” but scientific advances in each of these disciplines have led to an overall ever-increasing number of request for services in solving numerous other types of crimes. Due to changes in state laws and policies, crime labs are already seeing an increase in the number of sexual assault kits submitted to the laboratory. These submission increases will have an effect on DNA and non-DNA disciplines alike. The Department of Justice did not request funding for non-DNA disciplines in the federal fiscal year 2016 budget and the Consortium encourages Congress to authorize and fund programs in support of the other important forensic disciplines.

The member organizations of the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (CFSO) include the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT), the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD), the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), the International Association for Identification (IAI), the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME), and the Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT). The CFSO is the premiere organization representing over 15,000 forensic science practitioners from these organizations.

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