



*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*

The Honorable Paul Ryan
United States House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4901

Dear Speaker Ryan,

We are writing on behalf of over 21,000 forensic science practitioners represented by the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (CFSO) in support of S.2577, the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2016 and request that you bring it to the floor of the House under suspension of the rules.

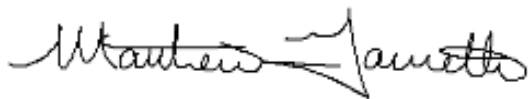
This legislation is of great importance to our community. It will enable us to increase the capacity of our laboratory and medicolegal death investigation systems, decrease backlogs of sexual assault kits, and maintain or improve turnaround times for other forensic evidence such as emerging drugs and latent print evidence.

S.2577 re-authorizes the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act. The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science grants are the only funds in the nation 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. The amount of physical evidence submitted to the nation's crime labs is increasing at an exponential rate, especially in the controlled substances, digital evidence, and toxicology disciplines. Most labs lack the capacity to process the amount of evidence we are currently being presented with, and we struggle to maintain turnaround times acceptable to law enforcement and officers of the court. The court systems should never be hamstrung because of a lack of laboratory resources to examine the evidence. The Coverdell program also provides funds for laboratories to gain and maintain accreditation. Recently the Department of Justice approved a recommendation that our community supports to require DOJ-run forensic labs to obtain and maintain accreditation and require all department prosecutors to use accredited labs to process forensic evidence when practicable. CFSO supports universal accreditation of forensic science service providers. This is critical to the continued improvement of forensic services in the United States. This legislation will ensure that this grant program continues.

Additionally, this bill provides for a needs assessment of the forensic community. This is critical to determining the instrumental, personnel, infrastructure, training, and other needs of public forensic laboratories. There are currently numerous on-going efforts in the federal government to assess what standards need to be developed for forensic science, what policies need to be enacted, and what research needs to be conducted. However, there is very little federal funding for these efforts. Some of the pending recommendations from the National Commission on Forensic Science call for research, training, and best practice implementation, but no cost analysis is being conducted to accompany this effort. The needs assessment in S. 2577 would allow Congress to understand the fiscal implementation issues with these policy and standards recommendations.

This legislation is of the utmost importance to the forensic science community and is essential to the continued success and advancement of the laboratory and medical examiner system. Therefore we urge the House of Representatives to bring up this bill for timely consideration and passage.

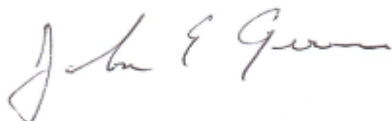
Sincerely,



Matthew Gamette M.S., C.P.M.
Chair,
Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations



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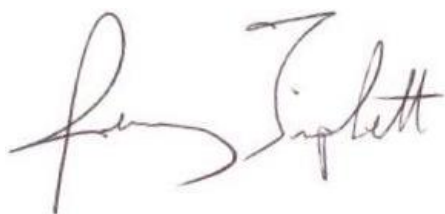
Bridget Lewis C.L.P.E.
President,
International Association for Identification



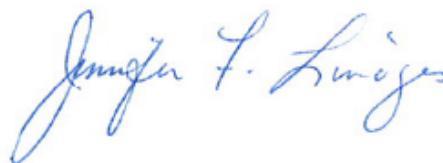
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