



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

November 17, 2014

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Holder:

The Consortium of Forensic Science is writing on behalf of the over 20,000 forensic scientists represented by our organization. We urge you to request in the FY16 budget, \$35 Million for the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Act of 2000, as it is currently authorized. This funding is of the highest priority to the forensic science community. The Coverdell funding enables the United States forensic science community to address the backlog of work in the laboratories and to provide training and continuing education to forensic science practitioners as well as to the medicolegal community. Further, we request that a process be put in place to develop a federal budget for forensic science that is reflective of the needs of the community.

These requests are due to the dramatic increase in utilization of forensic science services by the judicial system in the past several years. These increases are community wide, but the most dramatic increase in demand has been seen in the forensic disciplines of toxicology, controlled substances, latent prints, and firearms. Increased demand has resulted in increased backlogs and less time for a focus on technological advancement. We are asking you to recognize these backlogs and the financial needs of the forensic science community and to discuss them within the Department of Justice.

- Currently, 55% of the requests in crime laboratories are attributable to the toxicology, controlled substances, and latent fingerprint disciplines (Bureau of Justice Statistics Census of Publicly Funded Forensic Crime Laboratories 2009, published August 2012).
- Synthetic drugs are being created faster than legislation can legislate and faster than forensic laboratories can validate new testing methods to analyze for these drugs.
- Improvements in technologies used in the discipline of Toxicology now allow for the detection of additional drugs. Laboratories struggle to procure funding to acquire and properly implement these new toxicology technologies.
- Latent print backlogs have exploded. There are cases in the news each day that could have been solved years before if backlogs had not persisted.
- Trace analysis (fiber, glass, paint, soil, etc.) is a forensic science discipline that most laboratories cannot afford to provide due to the cost of the necessary instrumentation and the intense training required for analysts.
- Medical examiner and coroner offices in the United States lack sustainable funding mechanisms for medicolegal death investigations.

It is critical that forensic science laboratory leaders have flexible funding mechanisms like Coverdell to target the most critical backlogs and technology needs in non-DNA forensic science disciplines. A full appropriation of Coverdell will make a significant difference to forensic science laboratories and medicolegal death investigation offices in the United States.

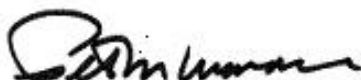
Respectfully Submitted,



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cc: Chairman Patrick J. Leahy, Senate Judiciary Committee
Ranking Member Charles E. Grassley, Senate Judiciary Committee
Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chairman Robert Goodlatte, House Judiciary Committee
Ranking Member John Conyers, House Judiciary Committee
Chairman Jim Sensenbrenner, House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations
Ranking Member Robert Scott, House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations
Chairman Harold Rogers, House Appropriations Committee
Ranking Member Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee
Chairman Frank Wolf, House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Ranking Member Chaka Fattah, House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies