



Forensic Science Needs to be Addressed by National Academy of Sciences

Lack of Forensic Funding at Critical Stage - Crime Lab Backlogs in ALL Forensic Disciplines

Washington DC – January 23, 2007 – The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (www.thecfso.org) applauds the creation of a National Academy of Sciences committee to study the current state of forensic science in the United States. The NAS Study will be one of the first objective analyses of the needs of the forensic community. Past studies have been conducted on DNA, but not on forensics as a whole. The first hearing is set for Jan. 25, 2006 in Washington DC.

"Most crime labs and medical examiner offices in our country are located in aging facilities, underfunded, lack equipment, and are not fully staffed, despite what you may see on television," says Joseph Polski, Chair, Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations. "The Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (www.theCFso.org) applauds the National Academy of Sciences' efforts to correct this severe lack of forensic funding."

A recent crime lab workload survey showed that forensic evidence backlogs exist in ALL areas of forensics – including firearms, trace evidence, DNA, toxicology, and pattern analysis, such as fingerprinting.

The biggest challenge facing crime labs and medical examiner offices is to keep facilities up-to-date with equipment and enough staff, given the persistent lack of funding.

In fiscal year 2006 the President's budget called for only DNA funding, but Congress modified that budget to provide funding for the other forensic disciplines. Per that provision included by Congress, \$108.5 million is designated for DNA testing and \$18.5 million in grants for the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Act.

Note that DNA testing is only a fraction of the work conducted at a crime lab. Grants from the Coverdell funding provide crime labs and medical examiner offices the ability to put money where each lab has the largest backlog or case log; whether that is DNA or fingerprinting analysis is irrelevant.

The CFSO maintains that forensic providers should determine their own needs, and put federal money to work where it needs support most. The bill included \$1.5 million for the National Academy of Sciences (www.nasonline.org) to conduct this study of forensic science.

About CFSO

CFSO is an association of six forensic science professional organizations made up of more than 12,000 forensic science professionals across the United States. Member organizations include: American Academy of Forensic Sciences; American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors; American Society of Crime Lab Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board; Forensic Quality Services;

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International Association for Identification; and National Association of Medical Examiners. The mission of the CFSO is to influence public policy at the national level and make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories and medical examiner offices.

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