



*American Academy of Forensic Sciences
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors
International Association for Identification
International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners
National Association of Medical Examiners
Society of Forensic Toxicologists*

Carla Walker Act

Expanding Forensic Genetic Genealogy to Solve Cold Cases and Deliver Justice

Executive Summary:

The **Carla Walker Act** would establish two **\$5 million pilot grant programs** to expand the use of **Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG)** in criminal investigations. The legislation passed the U.S. Senate and is currently pending in the House.

FGG has emerged as one of the most significant advances in forensic science in decades. By combining advanced DNA sequencing with genealogical research, FGG enables investigators to identify criminal suspects and unknown victims in cases where traditional forensic DNA analysis has failed. The Carla Walker Act would help make this technology available to more state and local investigative agencies, accelerating the resolution of violent cold cases while strengthening public safety.

The Need:

Thousands of homicide and sexual assault investigations remain unsolved because DNA recovered from crime scenes does not match any profile in the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). When conventional DNA testing reaches its limits, victims' families are often left without answers for decades.

Forensic Genetic Genealogy provides a powerful new investigative tool by analyzing hundreds of thousands of **Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms (SNPs)**—far more genetic markers than are used in traditional forensic DNA profiling. When conducted in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and investigative protocols, FGG can identify biological relatives through genealogy databases, allowing investigators to develop family trees that generate new investigative leads and identify previously unknown suspects or victims.

The successful identification of **Glen McCurley Jr.** as the killer of **Carla Walker**, who was abducted and murdered in Texas in 1974, demonstrated the transformative potential of this technology. After nearly five decades, FGG helped investigators solve a case that had long been considered unsolvable, bringing long-awaited answers to the victim's family.

What the Carla Walker Act Does:

The legislation would establish two competitive pilot grant programs to:

- **Support forensic whole-genome sequencing** of crime scene DNA samples that have produced no investigative leads through traditional DNA analysis.
- **Expand state and local FGG capacity** by funding technology, equipment, and implementation necessary to conduct forensic genetic genealogy investigations.

These investments would allow more jurisdictions to access advanced forensic capabilities that are currently unavailable because of cost or limited technical resources.

Public Safety Benefits:

Expanding access to Forensic Genetic Genealogy will help investigative agencies:

- Resolve violent cold cases that have remained unsolved for years or decades.
- Identify previously unknown offenders when CODIS searches produce no matches.
- Identify previously unidentified victims and human remains.
- Exonerate individuals who have been wrongly suspected or accused.
- Deliver long-awaited answers and closure to victims' families.
- Enhance public confidence in criminal justice system through the responsible application of advanced forensic science.

Policy Recommendation:

Congress should enact the **Carla Walker Act** to establish pilot grant programs that expand access to Forensic Genetic Genealogy nationwide. Strategic federal investment will help law enforcement agencies leverage emerging forensic technologies to solve violent crimes, identify unknown victims, and improve justice outcomes while supporting the continued development of scientifically reliable investigative methods.

The Carla Walker Act represents a targeted investment in innovation that will strengthen public safety, improve investigative effectiveness, and provide hope to victims' families who have waited years—or even decades—for answers.

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