



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

CONTACT YOUR SENATOR AND URGE THEM TO FUND THE PAUL COVERDELL GRANT

The DOJ reduced Coverdell grants by 70% in FY26

We urge you to call your Members of Congress (House and Senate), and ask to speak with the staff handling law enforcement/judiciary matters. (Enter your zip code <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>)

IF YOU CANNOT SPEAK TO A PERSON, REQUEST AN EMAIL

- Ask them to fund the Paul Coverdell Grant in the FY26 budget!
- Tell them:
 - Why Coverdell is important to you.
 - What you use Coverdell for in your state or in your agency.
 - Why you could use even more money in Coverdell (specifics) - \$10m for 50 states
 - How losing Coverdell funding will negatively affect your lab/office
- Invite them to your lab for a tour when they are in their home district.

BACKGROUND FOR CALLS

The National Institute of Justice's 2019 *Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices* Report to Congress was the first attempt to determine the approximate cost of meeting the current demand for services and the related costs of testimony by forensic service providers from public laboratories and medical examiners/coroner offices while ensuring valid and reliable results. The report concludes that there is insufficient funding to process the ever-increasing amounts of forensic evidence in a timely manner. **It states that the state, county, local and tribal crime laboratories, including medical examiner/coroner offices, have a \$640 million annual deficit for normal operations, and the increase in current opioid expenditures adds another \$270 million to that cost.**

West Virginia University data from Project Foresight lists growth in national forensic backlogs from 2017-2023 of up to 13%. Turnaround times in the United States forensic service providers from 2017-2023 have increased by up to 40%, including 10% in DNA casework, 19% in drug chemistry, 18% in toxicology, and 18% in firearms analysis. Specifically, the backlog in blood alcohol over the period from 2017-2023 was up 100%, crime scene was up 270%, controlled substances was up 23%, DNA was up 42%, forensic pathology was up 139%, and post-mortem toxicology was up 38%. In addition, States recently surveyed by our organization provided data to support that firearms case submissions increased between 18% and 154% in the last few years. During the same timeframe, the turnaround times (time from intake into the lab to forensic report issued) increased 954% in blood alcohol, 25% in crime scene, 232% in controlled substances, 88% in DNA, and 246% in post-mortem toxicology. However, funding has not increased to address these issues.

ACTION WE NEED FROM CONGRESS:

FUND the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act at \$50m, not \$10. The Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science grants stand alone as the nation's most crucial funding source for forensic science. These grants are the only dedicated funds available to state, county, local, and tribal forensic communities, supporting over 90% of all disciplines within the forensic science community. Without them, the ability of these vital agencies to solve crimes and bring about justice would be severely hampered.