Tuesday, June 17, 2025

{Senator/Representative Name}

{address}

Dear Senator Representative {last name},

As you may be aware, funding for the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act is facing a critical moment. The Coverdell Grant provides federal funds for state and local forensic labs to operate and tackle the ongoing task of using science to fight crime and is currently at risk of losing a significant portion of its funding for public forensic laboratories.

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 related costs by forensic services providers from public laboratories. It stated that state, county, local and tribal crime labs, including medical examiner/coroner offices, have a $640 million annual deficit for normal operations with an added $270 million cost to combat the current opioid crisis.

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%. In addition, States recently surveyed 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.

We are urging you to vote to fund the Paul Coverdell National Forensic Science Improvement Act at $50 million, and not at the projected $10 million. 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.

The Coverdell Grant has been used locally for {insert what you’ve used Coverdell funds for}.

Your support of funding forensic science, public forensic labs, and public safety in general is necessary and funding the Grant at $50 million is a step to show that support to continue the mission of providing sound forensic science to the judicial system.

Sincerely,

{insert name}