



July 02, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Shaheen, and Ranking Member Moran,

We write on behalf of the Association of State Criminal Investigators (ASCI), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), and the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) to provide our organizations' perspective on several forensic science matters related to President Biden's FY 2022 budget request. Together, our Associations represent a significant portion of the state and local law enforcement agencies in the United States, and our membership includes agencies in urban, suburban, and rural jurisdictions.

Law enforcement agencies rely on information provided by our forensic science partners to close cases and bring perpetrators to justice, exonerate innocent suspects, and provide closure to crime victims and their families and friends. The federal government currently operates several grant programs, such as the DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction grants, Sexual Assault Kit Initiative grants, Cold-Case grants, Post-Conviction Testing grants, Crime Gun Intelligence grants, and the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program, to improve the forensic science capabilities of state and local entities. Given the instrumental role forensic science plays in intelligence driven law enforcement investigations, we request the Committee fully fund these programs at the level included in the President's FY 2022 budget request.

We also request that the Committee provide additional funding for the standards development organizations (SDO) responsible for reviewing and publishing the forensic science standards drafted by NIST's Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC). These standards, which include both minimum requirements and best practices, are available to forensic science practitioners and other key stakeholders free of charge. However, more resources are needed to ensure SDOs can process the OSAC's proposed standards as effectively and

efficiently as possible. Raising the baseline of forensic science across the country—either through grant programs or national standards—will be an essential step in enhancing public safety. As the majority of public forensic science service providers are members of the law enforcement agencies we represent, we strongly support ensuring crime labs are accredited and have reliable access to current standards and best practices.

Law enforcement is working tirelessly to combat a nationwide surge in violent crime, which has been accompanied by a significant increase in gun violence. Law enforcement officers are now routinely responding to incidents with multiple victims and multiple shooters involving hundreds of gunshots. Officers also continue to recover an unprecedented number of firearms and ballistic evidence. This has created an evidence backlog, as forensic scientists in our crime labs and the crime labs we work with cannot keep pace with the sheer volume of firearms, bullets, and fired cartridge casings that need to be analyzed.

Forensic science, through programs such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and associated crime gun intelligence programs, is a core component of many gun violence reduction strategies. However, many labs do not have enough firearms examiners on staff to fully implement these programs. To help address this challenge, we request that the Committee provide the ATF with the requisite resources to create a Firearms Examiner Training Academy this fiscal year instead of waiting until FY 2023. By increasing the number of trained firearm examiners, the Training Academy will help local and state crime labs work through the firearms evidence backlog. In turn, this will provide law enforcement agencies with important investigative information more quickly, which will help disrupt the shooting cycle, solve crimes, and protect our communities from dangerous, violent criminals.

The 2019 National Institute of Justice report to Congress, “Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices,” found that there are currently challenges facing forensic science related to funding, the workforce, caseloads, and education. The budgetary and other impacts of COVID-19, current political dynamics, and several other factors have made addressing these issues even more complex. In order to assist state and local forensic science practitioners, we encourage the Committee to utilize the FY 2022 appropriations package to require that DOJ develop a strategy to work with state and local stakeholders to mitigate and overcome the challenges facing the forensic science profession today. By adequately funding crime laboratories, our nation will move one step closer to transparent policing that is based on timely, objective, and reliable analyses.

The programs described above are critical for public safety and help strengthen the collaboration between law enforcement and our forensic science partners. Their value cannot be understated. Thank you for taking our position and requests under advisement as the Committee drafts the FY 2022 appropriations bills. Please do not hesitate to contact us if any of our organizations can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Art Acevedo
Chief, Miami Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association



Cynthia Renaud
President
International Association of Chiefs of Police



Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian
Middlesex County, MA
President, Major County Sheriffs of America



Mark Keel
President, Association of State Criminal
Investigative Agencies
Chief, South Carolina Law Enforcement
Division



July 02, 2021

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Cartwright, and Ranking Member Aderholt,

We write on behalf of the Association of State Criminal Investigators (ASCI), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), and the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) to provide our organizations' perspective on several forensic science matters related to President Biden's FY 2022 budget request. Together, our Associations represent a significant portion of the state and local law enforcement agencies in the United States, and our membership includes agencies in urban, suburban, and rural jurisdictions.

Law enforcement agencies rely on information provided by our forensic science partners to close cases and bring perpetrators to justice, exonerate innocent suspects, and provide closure to crime victims and their families and friends. The federal government currently operates several grant programs, such as the DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction grants, Sexual Assault Kit Initiative grants, Cold-Case grants, Post-Conviction Testing grants, Crime Gun Intelligence grants, and the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program, to improve the forensic science capabilities of state and local entities. Given the instrumental role forensic science plays in intelligence driven law enforcement investigations, we request the Committee fully fund these programs at the level included in the President's FY 2022 budget request.

We also request that the Committee provide additional funding for the standards development organizations (SDO) responsible for reviewing and publishing the forensic science standards drafted by NIST's Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC). These standards, which include both minimum requirements and best practices, are available to forensic science practitioners and other key stakeholders free of charge. However, more resources are needed to ensure SDOs can process the OSAC's proposed standards as effectively and

efficiently as possible. Raising the baseline of forensic science across the country—either through grant programs or national standards—will be an essential step in enhancing public safety. As the majority of public forensic science service providers are members of the law enforcement agencies we represent, we strongly support ensuring crime labs are accredited and have reliable access to current standards and best practices.

Law enforcement is working tirelessly to combat a nationwide surge in violent crime, which has been accompanied by a significant increase in gun violence. Law enforcement officers are now routinely responding to incidents with multiple victims and multiple shooters involving hundreds of gunshots. Officers also continue to recover an unprecedented number of firearms and ballistic evidence. This has created an evidence backlog, as forensic scientists in our crime labs and the crime labs we work with cannot keep pace with the sheer volume of firearms, bullets, and fired cartridge casings that need to be analyzed.

Forensic science, through programs such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and associated crime gun intelligence programs, is a core component of many gun violence reduction strategies. However, many labs do not have enough firearms examiners on staff to fully implement these programs. To help address this challenge, we request that the Committee provide the ATF with the requisite resources to create a Firearms Examiner Training Academy this fiscal year instead of waiting until FY 2023. By increasing the number of trained firearm examiners, the Training Academy will help local and state crime labs work through the firearms evidence backlog. In turn, this will provide law enforcement agencies with important investigative information more quickly, which will help disrupt the shooting cycle, solve crimes, and protect our communities from dangerous, violent criminals.

The 2019 National Institute of Justice report to Congress, “Needs Assessment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Examiner/Coroner Offices,” found that there are currently challenges facing forensic science related to funding, the workforce, caseloads, and education. The budgetary and other impacts of COVID-19, current political dynamics, and several other factors have made addressing these issues even more complex. In order to assist state and local forensic science practitioners, we encourage the Committee to utilize the FY 2022 appropriations package to require that DOJ develop a strategy to work with state and local stakeholders to mitigate and overcome the challenges facing the forensic science profession today. By adequately funding crime laboratories, our nation will move one step closer to transparent policing that is based on timely, objective, and reliable analyses.

The programs described above are critical for public safety and help strengthen the collaboration between law enforcement and our forensic science partners. Their value cannot be understated. Thank you for taking our position and requests under advisement as the Committee drafts the FY 2022 appropriations bills. Please do not hesitate to contact us if any of our organizations can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Art Acevedo
Chief, Miami Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association



Cynthia Renaud
President
International Association of Chiefs of Police



Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian
Middlesex County, MA
President, Major County Sheriffs of America



Mark Keel
President, Association of State Criminal
Investigative Agencies
Chief, South Carolina Law Enforcement
Division