

July 19, 2017

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen,

We write to urge you to support ongoing forensic science research and standards development efforts overseen by the National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST). As emphasized in the National Academies report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward* (2009), and at subsequent congressional hearings, the integrity of our criminal justice system depends crucially on strong underlying scientific support of forensic science disciplines. The entire forensic community benefits from better coordination among law enforcement, legal professionals, forensic science practitioners, and scientists.

NIST is the lead scientific agency for much of the federal government's efforts to conduct research and coordinate scientific practice and standards, across many fields of science. With respect to criminal justice and law enforcement, the National Institute of Justice also serves an important role in funding scientific research.

We respectfully request you reject the administration's proposal to cut NIST forensic science research and reform work. Because of its pivotal role, NIST withdrawal from its leading role would be a devastating setback to the government's forensic science activities. The Center of Excellence devoted to forensic science complements internal research at NIST and extramural research supported by the Department of Justice to strengthen the science underlying analysis and interpretation of forensic evidence. We also request full support for technical merit evaluations and the Organization of Science Area Committees (OSAC) for Forensic Science overseen by NIST. OSAC brings together practitioners (from a wide range of agencies and organizations), scientists and legal professionals to develop standards and best practice guidelines in each forensic discipline. The technical merit evaluations ensure the accuracy of forensic science tests and procedures while assessing the capabilities and limitations of the methods.

Thanks to NIST's work and that of others, much progress has been made to bolster forensic science research and standards. We respectfully request your continued support.

Thank you for your consideration.

American Chemical Society
American Statistical Association
Entomological Society of America
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

The staff contact for this letter is Steve Pierson of the American Statistical Association: pierson@amstat.org.