

CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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It's Budget Time ...FY14

Every year the White House submits a proposed budget to Congress. Congress then takes that proposal into consideration and drafts its own budget. Specifically, the House Commerce, Justice, & Science Appropriations subcommittee and the Senate Commerce, Justice, & Science Appropriations subcommittee pass their own budgets which typically differ not only from the President's but from each others. They then must reconcile the differences which is called a Conference Report. Once the Conference Report passes the House and Senate it goes to the President for signature into law. The schedule for this is written into law but has not been abided by for over ten years and while we can hope, it is unlikely that it will pass on time this year, since it was delivered to Congress two months behind schedule.

So What Does It Say For Forensics?

The FY14 Budget has been proposed by the White House (see below) and is

Program	FY13	FY14 Proposed
Byrne Competitive Grants	\$14	\$14
Justice Assistance Grants	\$339	\$331
State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training	\$0	\$2
Smart Policing	\$6	\$46
Research and Evaluation, Violence Against Women (NIJ)	\$3	0
National Instant Criminal Background Check System	\$5	\$5
Post-conviction DNA Testing grants	\$0	\$0
Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Program Grants	\$0	\$0
DNA Initiative	\$113	\$91
Coverdell Forensic Science Grants	\$11	\$0
Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program	\$14	\$33
Forensic Initiative	0	\$9
National Institute of Justice	\$40	\$44.5

now being considered by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. For the Forensic community, the budget presents numerous challenges. Specifically, the DNA Initiative has been cut by \$22 million and the Coverdell Grants have not been funded at all. What is the most interesting budget proposal is perhaps the \$9 million for the Forensics Initiative. This program allocates the funding thusly: \$1 million for a Forensic Science Advisory Committee, \$3 million for NIST to create standards (replace SWGs), \$5 million for NSF to create Research Centers. In the upcoming days, the CFSO will be providing each of its Member organizations with advocacy packages to express your opinion regarding the lack of funding for the Coverdell Act. Please keep an eye out for it, and return your comments.

Justice For All Act

In the last issue, we discussed the Justice For All Act and advised that it will be brought up for debate in the new Congress. That has been confirmed. It is likely this bill will be re-visited by the US Senate in the next two months. We will be working with the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to ensure that the forensic service providers' concerns are properly addressed in this bill. As soon as we have a draft, we will provide an overview of the legislation for comment to each of our Member Organizations.