



The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors

"Excellence Through Leadership in Forensic Science Management"

Press Release

American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)
March 7, 2014

President's FY 2015 Budget for Reducing Untested Rape Kits and Assisting Prosecution of Sexual Assault Cases

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) applauds the efforts of the President and the Department of Justice in funding the reduction of untested rape kits and assisting the prosecution of sexual assault cases. We appreciate the decision by the Department of Justice to have district attorney offices, law enforcement agencies, sexual assault nurses, victim advocate groups and crime laboratory directors involved in the development and publication of best practices and protocols for the accurate, timely, and effective collection and processing of sexual assault cases as prescribed by the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act of 2013. The SAFER Act is contained in the Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress and was signed by the President on March 7, 2013. The publication of a best practices and protocols document that is available to all stakeholders would be a great start to tackling this tough challenge.

While ASCLD is encouraged by the funding support that the President and the Department of Justice have pledged to address the rape kit backlog, ASCLD would like to express its disappointment that the President again chose not to fund the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants program, in his FY 2015 budget. The Coverdell grant program is another crucial funding mechanism used by forensic service providers all across the nation, and this funding is vitally important in reducing the nation's backlogs in other forensic disciplines besides DNA. While the DNA backlog situation is critically important and widely reported, forensic laboratories are also currently struggling to keep up with a backlog of cases in digital evidence, latent prints, firearms/toolmarks, controlled substances and toxicology. ASCLD encourages the President to fund Coverdell for the full amount authorized in order to also reduce the backlogs in these forensic disciplines.