

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter of the Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations CFSO. We hope to provide you timely information on the budget and federal legislation as it pertains to State and Local forensic science. This issue will be dedicated to the President's Proposed FY13 budget. We hope you enjoy this and look forward to any thoughts or ideas you may have for us to include in upcoming editions.

NAMES OF CFSO REPRESENTATIVES

Pete Marone, Chair,
ASCLD/LAB Representative

J. C. (Jamie) Upshaw Downs,
Vice Chair, NAME Representative

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IAI Representative

Jill Spriggs, Secretary,
ASCLD Representative

Robert E. Barsley, DDS, JD,
AAFS Representative

Laurel Farrell,
SOFT/ABFT Representative

Beth Lavach,
Legislative Liaison

THE FY13 DOJ BUDGET

The Department of Justice submitted the following budget for FY13:

- \$48m for NIJ Research
- \$430m for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants
- \$25m for Byrne Competitive Grants
- \$20 Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grants
- \$20m for Evidence-Based Competitive Discretionary Grant Program
- \$100m DNA Initiative
- \$0 Coverdell Forensic Science Grants

The CFSO continues to be concerned that the Department of Justice does not fund the Coverdell grants despite the many requests of the community. We will continue to work with Congress to educate the key decision-makers that there are numerous disciplines within forensics and that all are critical to serving the criminal justice system in an efficient and effective manner.

Of note, the Attorney General testified this week in the House and will testify in the Senate next week on this budget.

FORENSIC ADVANCEMENT

The discussion among policy-makers to advance forensic science continues and 2012 will see a great deal of activity on this issue. Here is the update:

Senate Judiciary Committee

Senate Leahy continues to work toward legislation that they can move through the Senate and has recently provided some conceptual edits to the existing bill to the CFSO. These edits are being incorporated into the legislation and are expected to be released in March. We will work with our Membership to gather your edits to those changes to move the legislation closer to the needs of the community.

Senate Science Committee

Senator Rockefeller continues to discuss the drafting of legislation and we are in discussions with the staff about the concerns of the forensic service provider community.

Stay tuned for hearing schedules

The budget process is often compared to sausage making and in some respects it is an accurate analogy. It is difficult for many to understand what the budget really is as it does have numerous stages of debate. In theory this is to ensure that it is the budget the people need and want for the country.

Below are those milestones as they are supposed to occur:

February:

- President submits budget request to Congress.

February/March:

- DOJ officials testify in front of Congress to support the budget request
- Appropriations Committees conduct hearings with outside witnesses to discuss budget request.

May:

- Budget Committees adopt a budget resolution.

June/July/August:

- House and Senate prepare and pass appropriations bills.

September:

- House and Senate reconcile differences and agree to a final appropriation bill.
President signs or vetoes final bills.

October

- Beginning of fiscal year.