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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To improve the processing of samples of sexual assault evidence, and for
other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CLEAVER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To improve the processing of samples of sexual assault
evidence, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Backlog Justice Act
5 of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT DATABASE.**

7 The Attorney General, acting through the Director
8 of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, shall establish, main-
9 tain, and update not less than annually, a publicly acces-

1 sible online database of aggregated and anonymized data
2 from inventories or audits conducted by States and units
3 of local governments of the sexual assault evidence collec-
4 tion kits that have been submitted for testing and are in
5 the possession of the State or unit of local government
6 forensic service providers and shall include an estimate of
7 the amount of time it takes for each laboratory, with re-
8 spect to which data is submitted, to test a sexual assault
9 evidence collection kit.

10 **SEC. 3. TRAINING ANALYSTS TO TEST SAMPLES OF SEXUAL**
11 **ASSAULT EVIDENCE.**

12 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General, acting
13 through the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investiga-
14 tion, is authorized to develop and operate training pro-
15 grams at the Federal Bureau of Investigation labora-
16 tory—

17 (1) for individuals hired by States and units of
18 local government as analysts to test samples of sex-
19 ual assault evidence, which may include training at
20 the Federal Bureau of Investigation laboratory or at
21 State and local laboratories;

22 (2) pursuant to which individuals hired and
23 trained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as
24 analysts to test samples of sexual assault evidence,

1 may be hired by States and units of local govern-
2 ment upon completion of such training; and

(3) for DNA Technical Leader training, including a curriculum to host both in-person and remote training sessions for technical leaders or trained DNA examiners seeking to become technical leaders.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to require a State or local forensic science services provider to participate in a program established under subsection (a).

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031 to carry out this section.

14 SEC. 4. VALIDATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PRO-
15 GRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The Attorney General, acting through the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is authorized to convene and coordinate, in conjunction with State and local forensic science service providers, a validation and technology transfer program, pursuant to which the Federal Bureau of Investigation laboratory, in partnership with collaboratives of State and local forensic science service providers, may research new technologies and processes for processing DNA, and provide for use

1 by State and local laboratories related to such technologies
2 and processes—

3 (1) analytical protocols;

4 (2) developmental validation data; and

5 (3) model forensic laboratory instrument per-
6 formance verification plans.

7 (b) VALIDATION LIST.—Upon completing the re-
8 search described in subsection (a), the Director of the
9 Federal Bureau of Investigation is authorized to publish
10 a list of validated technologies and processes, along with
11 validation data and additional documentation related to
12 each such technology or process.

13 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
14 authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000 for each of fis-
15 cal years 2027 through 2031 to carry out this section.

16 **SEC. 5. INCREASE IN STOP GRANT FUNDING FOR STATES**
17 **THAT HAVE IN PLACE ELECTRONIC EVI-**
18 **DENCE TRACKING SYSTEMS FOR SEXUAL AS-**
19 **SAULT KITS.**

20 (a) AUTHORIZATION.—Beginning in fiscal year 2027,
21 the Attorney General shall increase by not more than 10
22 percent the amount provided to a State under the part
23 T of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets
24 Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10441 et seq.) if the State has
25 in place an electronic evidence tracking system for sexual

1 assault kits that complies with the requirements under
2 subsection (b).

3 (b) TRACKING SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.—In order to
4 qualify for the grant increase under subsection (a), the
5 tracking system shall be a website that provides informa-
6 tion to survivors of sexual assault who underwent a sexual
7 assault kit examination and their advocates on each stage
8 of the processing of a sexual assault kit, including from
9 the hospital, to a local law enforcement agency, through
10 the analysis process at a forensic laboratory, to final dis-
11 position.

12 (c) PERIOD OF INCREASE.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall
14 provide an increase in the amount provided to a
15 State under the program described in subsection (a)
16 for a 2-year period.

17 (2) LIMIT.—The Attorney General may not
18 provide an increase in the amount provided to a
19 State under the program described in subsection (a)
20 more than 4 times.

21 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
22 authorized to be appropriated \$1,500,000 for each of fis-
23 cal years 2027 through 2031 to carry out this section.

1 **SEC. 6. REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE PUBLIC FORENSIC**
2 **SCIENCE ENTERPRISE.**

3 (a) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date
4 of enactment of this Act, and every 3 years thereafter,
5 the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Secretary
6 of Commerce and Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
7 ices, shall submit to the covered congressional committees
8 and make publicly available a report on the status and
9 needs of the forensic science community.

10 (b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The report required under
11 subsection (a) shall be prepared in coordination with fo-
12 rensic science practitioners, medical examiners, coroners,
13 Department of Justice forensic technical working groups,
14 and forensic interagency working groups and shall—

15 (1) examine the status of current workload,
16 backlog, personnel, equipment, and training needs of
17 State and local crime laboratories, medical exam-
18 iners, coroners, and toxicology offices;

19 (2) include consideration of the study of the
20 National Institute of Justice entitled “Needs Assess-
21 ment of Forensic Laboratories and Medical Exam-
22 iner/Coroner Offices: A Report to Congress” (2019)
23 and other studies previously conducted by the fed-
24 eral government that are deemed appropriate by the
25 collaborating Departments; and

1 (3) include a strategic plan on how to address
2 the needs identified in the report.

3 (c) COVERED CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—In
4 this section, the term “covered congressional committees”
5 means—

6 (1) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Sen-
7 ate;

8 (2) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
9 House of Representatives;

10 (3) the Committee on Commerce, Science and
11 Transportation of the Senate;

12 (4) the Committee on Science, Space and Tech-
13 nology of the House of Representatives;

14 (5) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor
15 and Pensions of the Senate; and

16 (6) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of
17 the House of Representatives.