



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

9 May 2016

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hatch,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our support for S. 2348, the “Rapid DNA Act of 2015.” This legislation will implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, and to prevent DNA analysis backlogs.

The first crime to be solved using DNA analysis was in 1986. Since then, DNA analysis has opened many doors for law enforcement and innocence advocates to solve crime and exonerate the wrongfully accused. Unfortunately, under current law, obtaining results from DNA reference samples can take weeks or even months. In the meantime, individuals may be released back into the public to continue with their everyday lives or, in the case of the wrongfully accused, continue to reside in jail. Under current law and long before Rapid DNA technology was conceived, legislation was passed restricting access to the FBI’s Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) to DNA records generated by an accredited crime lab. This law needs to be updated to reflect the availability of Rapid DNA instruments and to allow law enforcement to use Rapid DNA reference samples in comparison to CODIS database comparisons.

Newly developed Rapid DNA technology offers a remarkably faster timetable for DNA analysis results. With a minimally invasive cheek swab, a DNA reference sample can be compared to the results in existing profiles in less than two hours. Within these two hours, an officer can determine if the individual is wanted for an outstanding crime, has a connection to evidence from a crime scene or, in turn, can be eliminated from suspicion almost immediately.

In August 2015, according to the Federal government’s best estimates, there are at least 350,000 DNA samples from murder and rape cases that remain untested. This is due partially to the amount of time it currently takes to process DNA reference samples. The implementation of Rapid DNA technology would help to prevent adding even more cases to the already overwhelming backlog.

— BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION —

The passage of this language will allow law enforcement to have DNA comparison access to CODIS and will significantly aid law enforcement to determine whether an individual is linked to a crime or investigation, prevent criminals from being released back out into the public, exonerate an individual and help prevent future DNA backlogs all within two hours.

On behalf of more than 330,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I want to thank you for introducing this legislation and amendment. If I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chuck Canterbury', written in a cursive style.

Chuck Canterbury
National President