



ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON CODES

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, ANALYSIS, AND
INVESTIGATION**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: Government oversight of forensic science laboratories

PURPOSE: To examine government oversight of forensic science laboratories in the State of New York

New York City

Wednesday, February 8, 2017

10:00 A.M.

Assembly Hearing Room 1923, 19th Floor
250 Broadway, New York, New York

ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY

Forensic science (often known as forensics) has been defined as the application of a broad spectrum of sciences and technologies to investigate events, after the fact, and establish what occurred based on collected evidence. This is especially important in law enforcement. Our state and local crime laboratories serve as the scientific bulwark of our criminal justice system. Across this State, in these forensic laboratories, the examination of evidence, testing of evidence, analysis of test results and reports prepared from such results often form the basis of verdicts determining the guilt or innocence of defendants in the criminal courts. The administration of justice, in many cases, rests on the work performed by these forensic laboratories.

Since 1999, New York has utilized a state oversight board comprised of fourteen persons, including stakeholders from within the criminal justice and forensic science community. The Commission on Forensic Science is based in the Office of Forensic Science, which is part of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, an executive agency. Since the Commission's creation, the field of DNA science has seen significant advances which have enabled closed cases to be re-opened, guilty parties to be convicted, and, as importantly, innocent individuals to be exonerated and freed from wrongful convictions. However, in this same time period, some analysts and laboratories in New York have been found to have engaged in misconduct resulting in errors and falsified results involving trace evidence, DWI analysis and controlled substance reports, among others.

This hearing will examine forensic science oversight in New York and help determine whether additional steps should be taken to assure the reliability and effectiveness of our practices. It will examine our state's forensic laboratories and related policies to help increase our understanding of the reliability and challenges in the operations of this important component of our state criminal justice system.

Persons invited to present testimony to the Committees at the above hearing should complete and return the enclosed reply form as soon as possible. It is important that the reply form be fully completed and returned so that persons may be notified in the event of emergency postponement or cancellation.

Oral testimony will be accepted by invitation only and limited to **ten (10)** minutes' duration. In preparing the order of witnesses, the Committees will attempt to accommodate individual requests to speak at particular times in view of special circumstances. These requests should be made on the attached reply form or communicated to Committee staff as early as possible.

Twenty (20) copies of any prepared testimony should be submitted at the hearing registration desk. The Committees would appreciate advance receipt of prepared statements.

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Assembly, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, accommodations will be provided, upon reasonable request, to afford such individuals access and admission to Assembly facilities and activities.

Joseph R. Lentol
Member of Assembly
Chair
Committee on Codes

Helene E. Weinstein
Member of Assembly
Chair
Committee on Judiciary

Matthew Titone
Member of Assembly
Chair
Committee on Oversight, Analysis, and Investigation

PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM

ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY

Persons invited to present testimony at the public hearing on government oversight of forensic science laboratories are requested to complete this reply form as soon as possible and mail, email or fax it to:

**Nathaniel Jenkins
Senior Analyst
Assembly Committee on Codes
Room 513, Capitol
Albany, New York 12248
Email: jenkinsn@nyassembly.gov
Phone: 518-455-4313
Fax: 518-455-7087**

I plan to attend and observe the public hearing on government oversight of forensic science laboratories on February 8, 2017.

I have been invited to the public hearing on government oversight of forensic science laboratories on February 8, 2017, and plan to present testimony. My testimony will be limited to ten (10) minutes, and I will answer any questions which may arise. I will provide twenty (20) copies of my prepared testimony.

I will address my remarks to the following subjects:

I do not plan to attend the above hearing.

I would like to be added to the Committee mailing list for notices and reports.

I would like to be removed from the Committee mailing list.

I will require assistance and/or handicapped accessibility information. **Please specify the type of assistance required:**

NAME: _____

TITLE: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

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