



**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

**2019-13**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING THE  
GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON FORENSIC SCIENCE**

WHEREAS, the mission of the Illinois State Police Division of Forensic Services ("ISP DFS") is to deliver complete, accurate, and timely crime scene evidence collection and forensic analysis to every law enforcement agency within the state;

WHEREAS, the ISP DFS, provides forensic science analytical services to more than 1,200 state, county, and local criminal justice agencies;

WHEREAS, with nearly 500 forensic services personnel completing over 70,000 forensic assignments every year, the ISP operates one of the largest lab systems in the country;

WHEREAS, there are two other (non-ISP) publicly-funded law enforcement forensic laboratories, the DuPage County Forensic Science Center and the Northeastern Illinois Regional Crime Laboratory, which also provide forensic analysis services to a subset of Illinois criminal justice agencies;

WHEREAS, in a recent report to Congress, the United State Government Accountability Office stated, "the reported number of backlogged requests for crime scene DNA analysis at state and local government labs has increased by 85 percent from 2011 through 2017...[T]his growth has occurred despite labs' collectively processing more requests over time...";

WHEREAS, as noted by the Joyful Heart Foundation, the national crime laboratory backlog "represents a lost opportunity to bring healing and justice to a survivor of sexual violence and safety to a community";

WHEREAS, while the appropriate level of funding is vitally important, the issues facing our crime laboratory system are not simply fiscal, and addressing these issues requires a systematic approach;

WHEREAS at least 10 states have legislatively created forensic science commissions; and

WHEREAS, state forensic science commissions provide a forum for robust discussions among forensic science stakeholders;

WHEREAS, state forensic science commissions focus on critical operation and oversight issues including communication and collaboration among laboratories and stakeholders, allocation of resources, laboratory improvements and the promulgation of accreditation and certification standards;

WHEREAS, a forensic science commission in Illinois would assist the Illinois State Police and the other publicly-funded forensic laboratories to proactively address issues and challenges in their forensic science work; and,

WHEREAS, a forensic science commission in Illinois would play an important and positive role in improving the provision of forensic science analytical services, including enhancing cooperation

among forensic science laboratories and stakeholders, which will ultimately improve public confidence in these services;

THEREFORE, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois, by virtue of the executive authority vested in me by Section 8 of Article V of the Constitution of the State of Illinois, hereby order as follows:

## **I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON FORENSIC SCIENCE**

There is hereby established the Governor's Task Force on Forensic Science (the "Forensic Science Task Force").

## **II. PURPOSE**

The Forensic Science Task Force shall bring together key stakeholders to work collaboratively to identify and analyze the issues and challenges facing Illinois' publicly-funded crime laboratories. Based on that analysis and using sound scientific judgment, the goal of the Forensic Science Task Force shall be to develop a report providing guidance on the best and most effective long-term strategies to overcome challenges facing the publicly-funded laboratories, ensure effective oversight of the laboratories, maximize the use of forensic technologies to solve crimes and protect the public, and identify potential scientific breakthroughs and new technologies.

## **III. DUTIES**

To achieve the purpose set forth in this Executive Order, the Forensic Science Task Force shall be charged with the following:

- (1) Review the current status of equipment, instrumentation, maintenance, facilities and staffing levels at ISP Crime Laboratories;
- (2) Identify obstacles to the acquisition of supplies, equipment and services that are necessary for the effective delivery of timely forensic science services by ISP crime laboratories and other publicly-funded laboratories;
- (3) Identify obstacles to recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of forensic scientists and crime scene investigators at ISP crime laboratories and other publicly-funded crime laboratories, including efforts to increase diversity;
- (4) Review the law and procedures to identify measures to improve submissions to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and to reduce all Illinois crime laboratories' backlogs;
- (5) Review and recommend improvements in the sharing of information concerning the status of criminal cases and testing of evidence, including the sharing of information between lead investigators and state's attorneys, and the updating of criminal history record information systems;
- (6) Review and recommend improvements in current procedures for prioritizing the testing of evidence at ISP crime laboratories and other publicly-funded crime laboratories;
- (7) Review the structure and work of forensic science commissions in other states and make recommendations concerning the creation and structure of such a commission in Illinois; and
- (8) Make any other recommendations and proposals which would, in the view of the Forensic Science Task Force, further ensure complete, accurate, and timely evidence collection and forensic analysis, as well as the transparent, efficient and effective operation of the publicly-funded Illinois crime laboratories.

Each department, agency, board, or authority of the State shall participate, provide records and other information to the Forensic Science Task Force as requested by the Forensic Science Task Force to carry out its duties, provided that the Forensic Science Task Force and the provider of such information shall make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the provision of information complies with all applicable laws.

The Illinois State Police shall provide administrative support to the Forensic Science Task Force, as needed.

## **IV. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORENSIC SCIENCE TASK FORCE**

The Forensic Science Task Force shall consist of members appointed by the Governor who have experience or expertise related to the criminal justice system and the testing of evidence by publicly-funded crime laboratories. The Forensic Science Task Force shall be chaired by the Director of the State Police. The members of the Forensic Science Task Force shall serve without compensation.

#### **V. REPORT AND SUNSET**

The Forensic Science Task Force shall issue a report detailing its findings and providing guidance and recommendations to the Governor by June 1, 2020. The report shall also be submitted to the General Assembly. Upon submission of this report, the Forensic Science Task Force shall be dissolved.

#### **VII. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE**

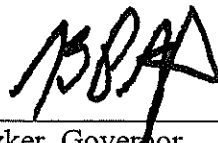
If any part of this Executive Order is found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect. The provisions of this Executive Order are severable.

#### **VIII. SAVINGS CLAUSE**

This Executive Order does not contravene, and shall not be construed to contravene, any federal law, state statute, or collective bargaining agreement.

#### **IX. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.



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JB Pritzker, Governor

Issued by Governor: August 16, 2019  
Filed with Secretary of State: August 16, 2019