
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO ESTABLISH A
WORKING GROUP TO STUDY FORENSIC LABORATORIES IN THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, forensic science is the process of using science
2 to resolve legal issues; and
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4 WHEREAS, forensic science may involve the application of
5 various fields of science, including anthropology, biology,
6 chemistry, engineering, genetics, medicine, pathology, voice
7 analysis, psychiatry, and toxicology to matters involving law
8 enforcement; and
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10 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Police Department's Scientific
11 Investigation Section includes the only full-service forensic
12 laboratory in the State; and
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14 WHEREAS, the Scientific Investigation Section's forensic
15 laboratory is commonly referred to as the "crime lab"; and
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17 WHEREAS, other law enforcement agencies in the State have
18 more limited facilities and trained staff available for the
19 application of forensic science; and
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21 WHEREAS, there may be opportunities to improve the
22 application of forensic science for law enforcement purposes in
23 the State; now, therefore,
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25 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
26 Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
27 of 2017, that the Department of the Attorney General is
28 requested to establish a working group to study forensic
29 laboratories in the State; and
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31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
32 to include representatives from the Federal Bureau of
33 Investigation, the Department of Public Safety, the Judiciary,



1 the police department of each county, the office of the
2 prosecutor of each county, the Office of the Public Defender,
3 criminal defense attorneys, the Hawaii State Bar Association,
4 the American Civil Liberties Union, state legislators, the
5 Department of Transportation, and a professor of forensic
6 science from Chaminade University; and
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8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
9 to study the capabilities, staffing levels, case loads, and task
10 completion times of forensic laboratories in the State; and
11 accreditation requirements and other issues related to the
12 operation of forensic laboratories; and
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
15 to specifically analyze the following issues:
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- 17 (1) The number of forensic tests conducted annually by the
18 Honolulu Police Department and other crime
19 laboratories in this State;
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- 21 (2) The sources of requests to the Honolulu Police
22 Department and other crimes laboratories in this State
23 for forensic testing;
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- 25 (3) The number of requests to the Honolulu Police
26 Department and other crime laboratories in this State
27 from state agencies for forensic testing;
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- 29 (4) Methods in which the Honolulu Police Department sends
30 evidence to other states for forensic testing;
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- 32 (5) The number of times each year that the Honolulu Police
33 Department sends evidence to other states for forensic
34 testing;
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- 36 (6) The costs for forensic testing that is conducted in
37 other states for the Honolulu Police Department;
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- 39 (7) Additional costs related to forensic testing,
40 including costs for experts from other states to
41 travel to this State to testify as prosecution
42 witnesses;



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- 2 (8) Any projected increases in costs for forensic testing
- 3 in this State;
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- 5 (9) The sources of funding for DNA testing of felons who
- 6 are convicted in this State; and
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- 8 (10) The sources of funding for equipping and operating
- 9 forensic laboratories in this State and in other
- 10 states; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is requested
13 to provide a report, including any findings, recommendations,
14 and proposed legislation, through the Attorney General, to the
15 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
16 the regular session of 2018; and

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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Resolution be transmitted to the Attorney General, the Federal
20 Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Public Safety, the
21 Judiciary, the police department of each county, the office of
22 the prosecutor of each county, the Office of the Public
23 Defender, the Hawaii State Bar Association, the American Civil
24 Liberties Union, and Chaminade University.

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