STATE OF CALIFORNIA
OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL

BILL LOCKYER

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Forensic laboratories are crucial to our criminal justice system. Forensic scientists in California's crime laboratories provide invaluable information that aids in the investigation and prosecution of crime through the scientific examination of physical evidence. Their efforts, carried out to the highest standards of scientific objectivity, integrity and quality, give voice to the "silent witness" of physical evidence and contribute to the cause of justice.

The criminal justice system increasingly relies on forensic science as new technology emerges at an ever-accelerating rate. The limited resources of our forensic delivery system are under increasing strain as the demand for scientific evidence continues to grow. To the extent that our laboratories are unable to meet the needs of their clients in a timely fashion, the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire criminal justice system can be undermined. We must ensure that pressure on the laboratories for more and faster results never reduces the accuracy and quality of their work, for that could result in injustice.

To address these challenges, I created the California Task Force on Forensic Services. The Task Force broadly represented California's criminal justice and forensic science communities. I asked the Task Force to assess the current status of our state's forensic service delivery system and to identify the steps we must take to ensure that California will continue to receive the highest quality crime laboratory service.

I am grateful for the expertise, commitment and hard work of the task force members. I strongly endorse the findings and recommendations outlined in this 2003 California Task Force on Forensic Services Force Report, which will provide a foundation and framework for future policy and funding decisions. I urge other public policy makers to lend their support as well.

Bill Lockyer
Attorney General

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