

Sincerely,

STEPHEN E. BOYD,
Assistant Attorney General.

Hon. WILLIAM P. BARR,
Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice,
Washington, DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL BARR: We are writing to urge your immediate adoption of a government watchdog agency's recommendations respecting a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) grant program that makes resources available for criminal laboratories across the country to process DNA evidence collected from crime scenes and criminal offenders. We also request that you commit to implement specific and measurable goals for this program, known as the "DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program" (CEBR), by the end of the year.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) repeatedly has faulted DOJ's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) for neglecting to articulate, in clear, specific, and measurable terms, program-wide goals for this formula grants program, originally authorized by Congress under the Debbie Smith Act. The CEBR program, which has received roughly \$1.5 billion in congressional appropriations since its inception 15 years ago, has been the subject of two critical GAO reports, one in 2013 and another this year.

As stated by GAO in a 2019 report on this subject:

"[T]he Office of Justice Programs (OJP)—the primary grant-making arm of the Department of Justice—has not consistently documented program-wide goals for its DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction grant program (CEBR). For instance, OJP has documented different meanings of "capacity enhancement." Additionally, CEBR performance measures do not fully reflect selected attributes of successful performance measures, such as having measurable targets. These issues hinder OJP's ability to assess program results."

This is not a new concern: GAO reported a half dozen years ago that DOJ was not doing enough to assess the results of the CEBR program. As stated in a 2013 report by the Comptroller General: "NIJ has a process in place to determine DNA and forensic program funding priorities, but its decisions regarding these priorities are not clearly documented." GAO noted that NIJ was unable to articulate its rationale for how funding priorities are determined, and "[w]ithout a clearly documented process that demonstrates the rationale for NIJ's funding priorities, there is limited transparency regarding how and why the agency is allocating its funding." In 2018, a GAO spokesperson testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that we lack the tools necessary to assess whether the CEBR program is working:

Concerns regarding the process for identifying lobbying-related conflicts of interest were reported by the Comptroller General in the 2019 report on the CEBR program. This 2019 report states that "OJP has not properly designed all controls related to selected requirements for conflicts of interest and lobbying." Because DOJ's Office of Inspector General also identified conflicts of interest with NIJ grant programs as early as 2009, it is imperative that the Office of Justice Programs immediately establish all appropriate controls necessary to eliminate such conflicts, as recommended by the Government Accountability Office in the report entitled, "DNA Evidence: DOJ Should Improve Performance Measurement and Properly Design controls for Nationwide Grant Program" (GAO-19-216).

We also request that you give your commitment, prior to the end of this calendar

year, to implement three steps, based on the 2019 and 2013 recommendations of the Comptroller General. Specifically, we ask that you commit that OJP will:

Define CEBR program-wide goals in clear, specific, and measurable terms by no later than June 30, 2019.

Consistently document these measurable goals for the CEBR program and use performance measures that fully reflect the recommendations made by GAO in its report entitled, "DNA Evidence: DOJ Should Improve Performance Measurement and Properly Design controls for Nationwide Grant Program" (GAO-19-216).

Describe any actions taken, including steps to eliminate conflicts of interest to improve the CEBR program based on the 2019 recommendations of the Comptroller General.

We look forward to hearing your response no later than December 20, 2019. If you have any questions, please contact Evelyn Fortier of Senator Grassley's staff or Franci Rooney of Senator Cornyn's staff. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
Chairman.
JOHN CORNYN,
U.S. Senator.

RECOGNIZING THE JESSE WHITE TUMBLERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, every year, 250 Chicago kids form 8 teams to perform 1,500 shows of acrobatic wonder at major sporting events, community businesses, and charities. They are called the Jesse White Tumblers, and for 60 years the troupe has delighted audiences in Illinois and across the world, including Hong Kong, Israel, and Croatia. Since 1959, more than 18,000 youths have put in the hard work and performed in the Jesse White Tumblers. Today, we congratulate this well-loved Chicago institution on its 60th anniversary.

Jesse White, the man whom the troupe is named after, is the 37th secretary of State for Illinois. He is the first African American to win statewide office in Illinois, and he has held the office longer than anyone else. I am honored to count him as a friend.

Just like the Tumblers, Jesse was an outstanding athlete and student growing up. He attended Waller High School in Chicago, earning All-City honors in basketball and baseball. He hoped to play professional baseball after graduating, but his father insisted on him going to college first. He went to Alabama State College, majoring in physical education. He was All-Conference in baseball and basketball. When he graduated, Jesse signed with the Chicago Cubs. Four days before leaving for spring training, the U.S. Army drafted him, assigning him to the 101st Airborne Division. In 1959, Jesse returned to Chicago and played third base in the Cubs minor league system.

During the off-season, Jesse taught physical education at his alma mater, Schiller Elementary School, and in the Chicago Park District. In December 1959, the Chicago Park District asked Jesse to create a gym show for the

Rockwell Garden Fieldhouse. The show he developed became the foundation for the Jesse White Tumblers.

Jesse White has served the people of Illinois throughout his career, along with being secretary of State for Illinois. He was the recorder of deeds of Cook County from 1992 to 1999, a legislator in the Illinois General Assembly for 16 years, and a public school teacher for 33 years. But his favorite role may still be coach of the Jesse White Tumblers.

Children between the ages of 6 and 20 can find a second family in the Jesse White Tumblers. Becoming a Tumbler is not an easy task. Thousands of young people apply every year, and few make it. In addition to athletic achievement, members must stay in school, maintain a C average, and stay away from drugs and alcohol. For the hard work, members get the thrill of performing and develop confidence, structure, and discipline. The program also helps with homework, study skills, and can provide financial support through scholarships. The Jesse White Tumblers have changed the lives of generations of young people.

The Jesse White Tumblers have earned their reputation as a legend in the State of Illinois. Here is to many more years of success.

RECOGNIZING AGRI-MARK CABOT CREAMERY CO-OPERATIVE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this year marks the 100th anniversary of one of Vermont's most nationally recognized businesses, Agri-Mark Cabot Creamery Co-operative. Founded as a small butter plant in Cabot, VT, with principles of producing high-quality dairy products and supporting farmers and communities, Cabot has grown to be a leader in the dairy industry, raising the bar for excellence across the country. The founders of Cabot prided themselves on quality products and doing things the right way. Cabot began with just 94 members that collectively owned 800 cows. Today, Cabot has expanded to include over 800 farm families, never losing sight of their core values of exceptional quality, safety, and community cooperation. These tenants have been upheld by their members repeatedly throughout the last century.

The farm families of Cabot Creamery Co-operative continue to be innovators, pioneers of sustainability, and dedicated stewards to their land and animals. Their products consistently prove to be the cream of the crop, winning many awards, and rightfully earning the title of "World's Best Cheddar." For decades, they have been earning top marks around the country and world, from respected competitions like the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, the American Cheese Society, and even the World Championship Cheese Contest. The recognition is well deserved after a century of hard work, dedication, and commitment shown by generations of farmers across New England and New York.