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Victims of Crime

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Mai Fernandez

April 2, 2015

Honorable Members of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Senate

Re: Letter of Support for H.R. 320

Dear Honorable Member of Congress:

We are writing today to show our support for passage of H.R. 320, *The Rapid DNA Act of 2015*, which establishes a system for the integration of Rapid DNA instruments for use by law enforcement.

As advocates for stronger rights, protections, and services for crime victims, we fervently support reforming current law to enable rapid processing of arrestee DNA samples, so as to not only ensure prompt and adequate justice for victims by keeping violent criminals off the street but also prevent future criminal acts by improperly released repeat offenders.

Due to rape kit backlogs, forensics laboratories around the country are often overworked and under-resourced. Rapid DNA implementation by local law enforcement entities is an effective tool to quickly identify arrestees and offenders, through cheek swab analysis of single-sample DNA profiles, allowing forensics laboratories to focus on more complex rape-kit testing which often involves separation and analysis of multiple DNA profiles.

Unlike traditional DNA analysis, which can take weeks as samples must be sent to and analyzed by a centralized laboratory, Rapid DNA analysis integrates multiple steps in the processing of DNA samples using a non-laboratory based sample to answer instrument in just 90 minutes. This technology has the potential to revolutionize the way in which arrested individuals are enrolled in the criminal justice system, shortening the time required for their DNA to be linked to unsolved crimes and expedite the exoneration of innocent suspects.

Many unsolved violent crimes could be prevented through efficient processing of rape kits and implementation of Rapid DNA analysis, a technology which is now approved by the FBI for use in accredited public

forensic laboratories. The victims of such crimes as well as their families deserve a criminal justice system which employs the most efficient and advanced technology to fight on their behalf.

H.R. 320 would allow law enforcement officers around the country to use Rapid DNA systems to compare DNA samples collected at the time of arrest to profiles in CODIS, thereby quickly identifying suspects linked to previous crimes, preventing future crime and delivering prompt justice to victims and their families. The bill also would require the FBI to amend current DNA related quality assurance and training standards to make certain these systems are properly used by qualified personnel under appropriate oversight, policies, and regulations.

We look forward to implementation of Rapid DNA instruments by local law enforcement entities through the passage of HR320, and would like to reiterate our organization's strong support of this exciting new capability in the interest of public safety. Please feel free to contact us if you would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mai Fernandez".

Mai Fernandez
Executive Director
The National Center for Victims of Crime