
**Office of the District Attorney
Alameda County**
Nancy E. O'Malley, District Attorney



Rene C. Davidson Courthouse
1225 Fallon Street, Suite 900
Oakland, CA 94612

March 30, 2015

US Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear US Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid:

I am writing to you today to demonstrate my strong support for the passage of H.R. 320, the *Rapid DNA Act of 2015*, in order to dramatically reduce current law enforcement DNA backlogs. This important legislation will allow Rapid DNA instruments to be used by booking stations and similar law enforcement entities in order to bring perpetrators of violent crimes to justice and exonerate the innocent in the most efficient manner possible.

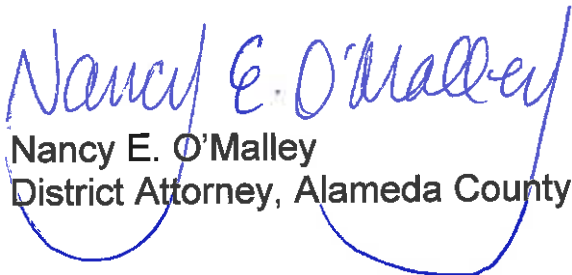
Too often, laboratories tasked with processing DNA samples are overworked and under-resourced, creating a seemingly insurmountable backlog of DNA samples. Not only is Rapid DNA an effective tool for law enforcement to quickly identify arrestees and offenders, it could significantly aid in reducing the current DNA analysis backlog.

Unlike traditional DNA analysis, which can take weeks or months to process samples because they must be sent to and analyzed by a laboratory, Rapid DNA analysis permits processing of seven DNA samples using a non-laboratory based machine in ninety minutes or less. Unfortunately, current law only allows FBI accredited laboratories to access our nationwide system of DNA profiles, the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). H.R. 320 would amend this and allow local law enforcement entities around the country to use a Rapid DNA system to compare DNA samples collected at the time of arrest to profiles in CODIS, thereby quickly identifying suspects and exonerating the innocent. The bill also would require the FBI to adopt quality assurance standards to govern the use of Rapid DNA systems by law enforcement entities.

Here in Alameda County, our office has launched the Alameda County Rape Kit Backlog Elimination Project, a program using Rapid DNA technology for confirmatory testing of suspects identified from processing rape kits at forensic labs. Through this program, we will eliminate the backlog that previously reached nearly two thousand rape kits by coordinating testing of all the kits in a private lab which will then be technically reviewed by our local crime lab before being uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). We believe that the Alameda County Backlog Elimination Project will demonstrate the overwhelming benefits of using Rapid DNA technology for the rest of the country. Utilizing this technology for testing simple reference samples frees up laboratory time and resources to test more complex evidence. To realize the full benefits of this program, the proposals contained in H.R. 320 are required in order to maximize the use of this ground-breaking technology. By making the DNA testing process as fast and efficient as possible, we can ensure swift justice for victims of crime as well as for the wrongly accused.

We welcome your questions and comments – please feel free to contact me anytime to discuss this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Nancy E. O'Malley
District Attorney, Alameda County



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Washington, DC 20510

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