

# STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2008

Source  
HJR 34

Legislative  
Resolve No.  
39



Urging the United States Congress to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program.

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## BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

**WHEREAS** DNA technology is increasingly vital to ensuring accuracy and fairness in the criminal justice system, but is not yet considered a routine tool for criminal identification by law enforcement; and

**WHEREAS** over 50,000 law enforcement investigations have already been aided nationwide because of DNA matches made through the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Combined DNA Index System, bringing justice to victims and removing criminals from the streets; and

**WHEREAS** the Innocence Project has used DNA in over 200 cases to exonerate persons who were wrongfully convicted of crimes; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska and other states throughout the nation have significantly expanded their DNA programs to include a growing number of convicted and arrested felons to match against unsolved crimes; and

**WHEREAS** the demand for DNA testing in both violent and nonviolent crimes has

continued to increase as the reliability of this evidence is proven; and

**WHEREAS** many laboratories still maintain DNA backlogs of six months or longer and are unable to meet the growing demand for DNA testing, despite funding commitments from state and local governments; and

**WHEREAS** the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program has permitted state and local governments an opportunity to begin to maximize the full potential of forensic DNA through backlog reduction, but much work remains to be done;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the United States Congress to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program at current or increased levels.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.