



State of North Carolina  
**FORENSIC SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD**  
Raleigh, North Carolina

9 December, 2013

MEMORANDUM

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To: North Carolina Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Berger, Senator Harry Brown, Senator Peter S. Brunstetter and Senator Neal Hunt  
Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives Thom Tillis,  
Representative Nelson Dollar, Representative Justin Burr,  
Representative Bryan R. Holloway, Representative Linda P. Johnson and  
Representative Pat McElraft

From: The North Carolina Forensic Science Advisory Board

Subject: Consideration for Salary Adjustments at the North Carolina  
State Crime Laboratory

The North Carolina Forensic Science Advisory Board (NCFASB) was created by NC Session Law 2011-19. This memorandum addresses the Board's determination of a singular priority issue for the North Carolina State Crime Laboratory (NCSCCL).

The results of an independent salary survey commissioned in early 2013 by the North Carolina Department of Justice were discussed at the NCFASB meeting on October 22, 2013. Public crime laboratories in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia were surveyed. Disparities in pay were noted across the board when positions offered by the NCSCCL were compared to those of other crime laboratories in the region:

- NCSCCL Forensic Scientist I, II and III average salaries (pay grades 72, 74 and 77) were approximately 20% lower than the average salaries of comparable positions in the region.
- NCSCCL management average salaries (pay grades 78, 79, and 80T) were all lower than the average in the region.
- The current *maximum* salary for the NCSCCL Crime Laboratory Director (pay grade 82) is lower than the *average* salary of the crime lab directors of all the four responding laboratories. Two of the four labs appear to employ less than a fourth of the personnel employed by the NCSCCL.

The NCSCCL has lost more than 10% of its workforce in each of the last two years. Hiring, training and achieving certification for each replacement scientist requires roughly two years and costs over \$100,000 per position. Personnel retention is becoming increasingly difficult as salaries have not increased for several years. Retention is a key part of reducing turnaround times and reducing pending caseloads.

The NCFSAB strongly recommends that the North Carolina General Assembly review and implement options to improve the financial benefits for NCSCCL employees. A combination of salary adjustments and position reclassifications should be considered. Competitive salaries are a key part of ensuring that the NCSCCL is able to provide the highest quality crime laboratory services in a timely matter.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the NCFSAB,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter M. Marone".

Peter M. Marone, Chair

cc: Roy Cooper, North Carolina Attorney General

*Replies should be directed c/o Matthew L. Boyatt, Assistant Attorney General & Counsel for the  
North Carolina Forensic Advisory Board, Post Office Box 629, Raleigh, NC 27602-0629*