



## Debbie Smith Act & Justice Served Act Overview

### *Essential Items*

- Congress should prioritize reauthorizing the Debbie Smith Act with minimal changes during the 118th Congress.
- Appropriators must ensure that 5 to 7 percent of funding in Debbie Smith goes to prosecutors' offices to address the backlog of violent crime cases.

### *History*

The Debbie Smith Act was originally signed into law in 2004. Through grant programs, the Act provides state and local crime labs & prosecutors' offices resources to end the backlog of untested DNA evidence. Named for survivor Debbie Smith, the Act has been effective in assisting investigations into both violent and non-violent crime. The Justice Served Act, signed into law during the 115th Congress, established a new purpose area in the Debbie Smith Act for prosecution offices attempting to address the backlog of violent crime cases.

### *The Debbie Smith Act*

- Creates a formula grant program with 9 purpose areas to provide funding for crime labs and state & local prosecution offices to address the backlog of DNA evidence.
- Improves DNA training and education for law enforcement, correctional personnel, and officers of the court.
- The Act has resulted in more than 860,000 DNA cases processed. [1]
- Of all the investigations aided by the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), nearly half are a result of the Debbie Smith Act. [2]
- Since it was first enacted in 2004, this program has directly supported the analysis of over 1.79 million DNA Cases, resulting in more than 308,000 hits in the federal DNA criminal database – representing 56% of all DNA matches. [3]

### *The Justice Served Act*

Authorizes a carve-out of 5 to 7 percent of funding from the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Elimination Act to enhance capacity of state and local prosecution offices to address the backlog of violent crime cases.

[1] <https://www.cornyn.senate.gov/newsroom/cornyn-colleagues-introduce-bill-to-reauthorize-debbie-smith-act-fight-rape-kit-backlog/>

[2] <https://www.rainn.org/news/senate-moves-end-rape-kit-backlog>

[3] <https://wagner.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/wagner-applauds-house-passage-her-debbie-smith-act>

### *Staff Contact*



Jason Davidson



[jdavidson@ndaajustice.org](mailto:jdavidson@ndaajustice.org)



(443) 745-8130



[ndaajustice.org](http://ndaajustice.org)