



HARRIS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
DEVON ANDERSON

August 21, 2015

**NOTICE OF IMPACT OF FBI DATABASE ERRORS ON
DNA MIXTURE INTERPRETATION**

The Harris County District Attorney's Office has recently learned of changes to DNA mixture interpretation protocols that may have a material impact on criminal cases. The changes in protocol have occurred at our local forensic laboratories within the past five years. While unrelated to the FBI's Updated STR Population Statistics, the issue came to light when the statistical recalculations were being conducted and reported. Because the analysts were issuing and signing new reports, they were required to revise previously-obtained mixture results (based on old protocols) with results utilizing their current protocols.

The potential impact of these new protocols on criminal cases is still unknown; however, it has understandably raised concern for both scientists and lawyers within the criminal justice system. For a detailed explanation of this complex issue and the work that is being done in response to it, please see the attached publication recently authored by the Texas Forensic Science Commission, "Unintended Catalyst: the Effects of 1999 and 2001 FBI STR Population Data Corrections on an Evaluation of DNA Mixture Interpretation in Texas" as well as a notice letter being distributed this date to members of the Texas Criminal Justice Community from Vincent J. M. DiMaio, M.D., the Commission's Presiding Officer.

It is my understanding the Commission is planning on holding a webinar in the near future to discuss this issue and to answer questions. Please consult the Commission's website at <http://www.fsc.texas.gov/> for more information.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office is working closely with the Forensic Science Commission on this project. We are also in the process of identifying all Harris County cases in which DNA mixtures have been analyzed. In the interim, this office will work to facilitate any requests for DNA case reviews based on the

changes in protocols. Anyone wishing to request a case review may submit a written request to our office by emailing DNAPopulationStats@dao.hctx.net.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devon Anderson", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Devon Anderson
District Attorney
Harris County, Texas