



**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
CRIME LABORATORY DIRECTORS, INC.**

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September 28, 2016

Attn: NCFS - Reporting and Testimony Subcommittee

The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors represents more than 600 members of crime laboratory directors and forensic science managers dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation. The membership represents both private and public institutions from all 50 states in the U.S. and eighteen countries from across the globe. Our mission is to promote the effectiveness of crime laboratory leaders throughout the world by facilitating communication among members, sharing critical information, providing relevant training, promoting crime laboratory accreditation, and encouraging scientific and managerial excellence in the global forensic science community.

ASCLD is dedicated to advancing forensic science through a multitude of initiatives including the National Commission on Forensic Science. The efforts of the Commission are important and have significant implications for the entire criminal justice community. As a result, the ASCLD Board of Directors offers the following comments, recommendations, and impact statements for consideration by the sub-committee on the *“Views of the Commission – Statistical Statements in Forensic Testimony”*.

ASCLD remains ready to be a continuing resource to assist the Commission and the Department of Justice in the development of these important work products for the forensic science community so that a broader based acceptance and implementation of these products may be realized.

Regards,

ASCLD Board of Directors



The American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors

"Excellence Through Leadership in Forensic Science Management"

ASCLD Board Comments

Views of the Commission: Statistical Statements in Forensic Testimony

The ASCLD Board of Directors recognizes there is a significant amount of research being conducted in the use of statistical statements for feature comparison methods. It is an important effort that is ongoing that will benefit the entire criminal justice community. The use of statistical models is an important application for all of forensic science disciplines and can be of great value to the trier of fact.

The Board also recognizes consensus does not exist in the scientific community as to the appropriate model per discipline or for the whole of forensic science. It is important to acknowledge that there is still work to be done in this arena. ASCLD applauds the NCFS for including this discussion in the background of their Views document and requests that an emphasis be placed on supporting this research. In order to affect change within the practice of these disciplines, it is important to recognize and fund these efforts by both academia and practitioners.

Additionally, the ASCLD Board of Directors agrees with many of the views provided by the NCFS to include Views 1, 2, and 7. We also recommend the following changes to the remaining Views.

Views 3 – 6, as written, address the testimony of an expert witness. The Board recommends that the following footnote be added to these recommendations.

The Department of Justice has initiated the development of Uniform Language for Testimony and Reports. This effort, once concluded, will provide specific language regarding the testimony and reporting of associations made between a known and a questioned sample for various forensic science disciplines. These ULTRs will direct practitioners on the limits of testimony until such time the scientific community provides a consensus statistical model either by best practice, guidance, or standard.