



WENDY GREUEL
CONTROLLER

January 14, 2010

The Honorable Antonio Villaraigosa
Honorable Members of the City Council

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa and Honorable Councilmembers,

I was shocked when I learned that the City's Managed Hiring Committee had not yet approved the DNA backlog reduction positions approved in the 2009-10 budget. I believe that this would short-circuit the progress that we made in reducing the DNA rape kit backlog. This was outlined in my recent follow-up audit on the "Forensic DNA Backlog" where I found that there was a direct correlation between the reduction in the backlog and the increase in criminalists and the outsourcing of kits.

When I was on the Council during the 2009-10 budget deliberations, the Council unanimously approved funding and position authority for 26 positions in the LAPD budget to assist in decreasing this backlog. These positions were explicitly placed in the LAPD's budget, demonstrating the Council's priority in filling these positions. The Council also unanimously approved a motion that allowed LAPD to move forward on these positions, with the intent to hire immediately.

I understand that the City is considering a proposal to solely contract out for testing the DNA rape kits instead of having a combination of LAPD staff and contracting out of kits. My audit found that using contractors alone will only serve to grow the secondary backlog of rape kits.

As I demonstrated in my audit, the kits tested by contractors require a technical review by the LAPD's Scientific Investigation Division before the results can be uploaded to the Federal Combined DNA Information System (CODIS). These rape kits wait an average of 72 days for a four hour staff review. While my audit called for changes to the FBI policy that requires staff review, we still need to address rape kits within the current structure. For the kits that will be contracted-out, the LAPD still needs to perform the intake, send them to the contractor, and then upload them to CODIS.

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I strongly urge the Mayor and Council to move quickly to rectify this situation. The backlog of rape kits is one of the great embarrassments our City has faced in recent years. We cannot take any action that would move us further away from our goal of clearing this backlog once and for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wendy Greuel".

Wendy Greuel
City Controller