



MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Sen. Cornyn, Mayor Turner, HFSC, sexual assault survivors demand U.S. House approve grant dollars for rape kit testing

October 1, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sen. John Cornyn, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and HFSC CEO and president Dr. Peter Stout will hold a roundtable discussion with sexual assault survivors and other stakeholders on the need for the U.S. House of Representatives to quickly reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act after crucial rape kit testing grant dollars ran out September 30.

The Debbie Smith Act, authored by Sen. John Cornyn, has been reauthorized by the U.S. Senate. The act is the key grant funding source for crime laboratories nationwide to do DNA testing on sexual assault kits and eliminate longstanding backlogs. The U.S. House of Representatives has not reauthorized the act this year, even though it previously sailed through both branches with bipartisan support.

Sen. Cornyn, Mayor Turner, Dr. Stout, Dr. Stacey Mitchell, HFSC's board chair, and other HFSC executives will be available to answer questions following the discussion. Media will also be invited to join Sen. Cornyn and Mayor Turner as they get a sneak peek of HFSC's new laboratory facility ahead of an October 22 grand opening.

WHEN: 10:50 a.m. to noon, October 3, 2019

10:50 a.m.: Roundtable

11:30 a.m.: Tour

11:40 a.m.: News conference

WHERE: 500 Jefferson St., 18th floor

Houston, Texas 77002

Paid parking is available at 500 Jefferson

HFSC is a local government corporation that provides forensic services to the City of Houston and other local agencies. HFSC is overseen by a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor of Houston and confirmed by the Houston City Council. Its management structure is designed to be responsive to a 2009 recommendation by the National Academy of Sciences that called for crime laboratories to be independent of law enforcement and prosecutorial branches of government.

HFSC operates in seven forensic disciplines.

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