

Sincerely,

STEPHEN E. BOYD,  
Assistant Attorney General.

Hon. WILLIAM P. BARR,  
Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL BARR: We are writing to urge your immediate adoption of a government watchdog agency's recommendations respecting a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) grant program that makes resources available for criminal laboratories across the country to process DNA evidence collected from crime scenes and criminal offenders. We also request that you commit to implement specific and measurable goals for this program, known as the "DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program" (CEBR), by the end of the year.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) repeatedly has faulted DOJ's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) for neglecting to articulate, in clear, specific, and measurable terms, program-wide goals for this formula grants program, originally authorized by Congress under the Debbie Smith Act. The CEBR program, which has received roughly \$1.5 billion in congressional appropriations since its inception 15 years ago, has been the subject of two critical GAO reports, one in 2013 and another this year.

As stated by GAO in a 2019 report on this subject:

"[T]he Office of Justice Programs (OJP)—the primary grant-making arm of the Department of Justice—has not consistently documented program-wide goals for its DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction grant program (CEBR). For instance, OJP has documented different meanings of "capacity enhancement." Additionally, CEBR performance measures do not fully reflect selected attributes of successful performance measures, such as having measurable targets. These issues hinder OJP's ability to assess program results."

This is not a new concern: GAO reported a half dozen years ago that DOJ was not doing enough to assess the results of the CEBR program. As stated in a 2013 report by the Comptroller General: "NIJ has a process in place to determine DNA and forensic program funding priorities, but its decisions regarding these priorities are not clearly documented." GAO noted that NIJ was unable to articulate its rationale for how funding priorities are determined, and "[w]ithout a clearly documented process that demonstrates the rationale for NIJ's funding priorities, there is limited transparency regarding how and why the agency is allocating its funding." In 2018, a GAO spokesperson testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that we lack the tools necessary to assess whether the CEBR program is working:

Concerns regarding the process for identifying lobbying-related conflicts of interest were reported by the Comptroller General in the 2019 report on the CEBR program. This 2019 report states that "OJP has not properly designed all controls related to selected requirements for conflicts of interest and lobbying." Because DOJ's Office of Inspector General also identified conflicts of interest with NIJ grant programs as early as 2009, it is imperative that the Office of Justice Programs immediately establish all appropriate controls necessary to eliminate such conflicts, as recommended by the Government Accountability Office in the report entitled, "DNA Evidence: DOJ Should Improve Performance Measurement and Properly Design controls for Nationwide Grant Program" (GAO-19-216).

We also request that you give your commitment, prior to the end of this calendar

year, to implement three steps, based on the 2019 and 2013 recommendations of the Comptroller General. Specifically, we ask that you commit that OJP will:

Define CEBR program-wide goals in clear, specific, and measurable terms by no later than June 30, 2019.

Consistently document these measurable goals for the CEBR program and use performance measures that fully reflect the recommendations made by GAO in its report entitled, "DNA Evidence: DOJ Should Improve Performance Measurement and Properly Design controls for Nationwide Grant Program" (GAO-19-216).

Describe any actions taken, including steps to eliminate conflicts of interest to improve the CEBR program based on the 2019 recommendations of the Comptroller General.

We look forward to hearing your response no later than December 20, 2019. If you have any questions, please contact Evelyn Fortier of Senator Grassley's staff or Franci Rooney of Senator Cornyn's staff. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,  
Chairman.  
JOHN CORNYN,  
U.S. Senator.

#### RECOGNIZING THE JESSE WHITE TUMBLERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, every year, 250 Chicago kids form 8 teams to perform 1,500 shows of acrobatic wonder at major sporting events, community businesses, and charities. They are called the Jesse White Tumblers, and for 60 years the troupe has delighted audiences in Illinois and across the world, including Hong Kong, Israel, and Croatia. Since 1959, more than 18,000 youths have put in the hard work and performed in the Jesse White Tumblers. Today, we congratulate this well-loved Chicago institution on its 60th anniversary.

Jesse White, the man whom the troupe is named after, is the 37th secretary of State for Illinois. He is the first African American to win statewide office in Illinois, and he has held the office longer than anyone else. I am honored to count him as a friend.

Just like the Tumblers, Jesse was an outstanding athlete and student growing up. He attended Waller High School in Chicago, earning All-City honors in basketball and baseball. He hoped to play professional baseball after graduating, but his father insisted on him going to college first. He went to Alabama State College, majoring in physical education. He was All-Conference in baseball and basketball. When he graduated, Jesse signed with the Chicago Cubs. Four days before leaving for spring training, the U.S. Army drafted him, assigning him to the 101st Airborne Division. In 1959, Jesse returned to Chicago and played third base in the Cubs minor league system.

During the off-season, Jesse taught physical education at his alma mater, Schiller Elementary School, and in the Chicago Park District. In December 1959, the Chicago Park District asked Jesse to create a gym show for the

Rockwell Garden Fieldhouse. The show he developed became the foundation for the Jesse White Tumblers.

Jesse White has served the people of Illinois throughout his career, along with being secretary of State for Illinois. He was the recorder of deeds of Cook County from 1992 to 1999, a legislator in the Illinois General Assembly for 16 years, and a public school teacher for 33 years. But his favorite role may still be coach of the Jesse White Tumblers.

Children between the ages of 6 and 20 can find a second family in the Jesse White Tumblers. Becoming a Tumbler is not an easy task. Thousands of young people apply every year, and few make it. In addition to athletic achievement, members must stay in school, maintain a C average, and stay away from drugs and alcohol. For the hard work, members get the thrill of performing and develop confidence, structure, and discipline. The program also helps with homework, study skills, and can provide financial support through scholarships. The Jesse White Tumblers have changed the lives of generations of young people.

The Jesse White Tumblers have earned their reputation as a legend in the State of Illinois. Here is to many more years of success.

#### RECOGNIZING AGRI-MARK CABOT CREAMERY CO-OPERATIVE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this year marks the 100th anniversary of one of Vermont's most nationally recognized businesses, Agri-Mark Cabot Creamery Co-operative. Founded as a small butter plant in Cabot, VT, with principles of producing high-quality dairy products and supporting farmers and communities, Cabot has grown to be a leader in the dairy industry, raising the bar for excellence across the country. The founders of Cabot prided themselves on quality products and doing things the right way. Cabot began with just 94 members that collectively owned 800 cows. Today, Cabot has expanded to include over 800 farm families, never losing sight of their core values of exceptional quality, safety, and community cooperation. These tenants have been upheld by their members repeatedly throughout the last century.

The farm families of Cabot Creamery Co-operative continue to be innovators, pioneers of sustainability, and dedicated stewards to their land and animals. Their products consistently prove to be the cream of the crop, winning many awards, and rightfully earning the title of "World's Best Cheddar." For decades, they have been earning top marks around the country and world, from respected competitions like the U.S. Championship Cheese Contest, the American Cheese Society, and even the World Championship Cheese Contest. The recognition is well deserved after a century of hard work, dedication, and commitment shown by generations of farmers across New England and New York.

Not only do they produce excellent products, Cabot's farm families are leaders of sustainability. They have worked to strengthen green farming practices, some of which provide Vermont families with electricity, and even their own electricity processing plant. They have made continuous efforts to create more sustainable practices, from conserving water to installing solar panels. Cabot and their members have been awarded prestigious honors, such as U.S. Dairy Sustainability Awards and New England Green Pastures Award for Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year. Cabot has recently been classified as a B Corporation, the first dairy cooperative to achieve that certification, which shows the strong commitment they have to being a socially and environmentally responsible business.

I have had the pleasure to work with Cabot, creating lasting memories and an incredible working relationship that has supported the dairy industry in Vermont and the entire country. I am privileged to host Cabot at my annual Taste of Vermont event, and guests of the reception are often greeted by the distinct Cabot plaid upon entering the Kennedy Caucus Room on Capitol Hill.

As a Vermonter, I am proud of the incredible service Cabot, its leaders, and their farmers provide for our State, our economy, and the larger dairy industry. Cabot truly represents the essence, values, and traditions of what makes Vermont special. I congratulate Cabot and their dairy farmers on 100 years of hard work and success.

#### RECOGNIZING 14TH STAR BREWERY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to celebrate the success of a Vermont entrepreneur and small business owner, Steve Gagner, of 14th Star Brewery. Started in 2012, 14th Star Brewery began in a hand-built brew house in St. Albans, VT, with beer brewed in repurposed maple sap collection tanks. Under the leadership of the team he has assembled, the company has grown immensely since then, increasing their staff to 24 and moving to a new location where they are expected to produce over 8,000 barrels of craft beer by year-end. 14th Star has become widely popular throughout Vermont and distributes to six nearby States.

The creation of this Vermont brewery, however, began on the battlefields of Afghanistan. The founders of 14th Star, Steve Gagner and Matt Kehaya, served in Afghanistan with the Vermont Army National Guard. During their deployment, they drafted the business plan for their dream company on the back of a notebook. Even as the business has grown dramatically, Steve continues to serve in the Vermont Army National Guard and has been named commanding officer of the Army Mountain Warfare School in Jericho, VT. Steve was deployed for two combat tours and is a two-time

Bronze Star recipient. He also teaches the next generation of leaders as an assistant professor at Norwich University.

Named after Vermont's status as the 14th State to join the Union, Steve has ensured that 14th Star Brewery maintains a close tie to service of our fellow Vermonters. Taking its values from Steve and his close-knit leadership team, the brewery directs a portion of its proceeds towards supporting Purple Hearts Reunited, an organization founded by fellow Vermont Guardsman Zach Fike to return lost or stolen military medals to veterans and their families. Each June, which is PTSD awareness month, 14th Star releases a special brew, 11Bravo, and hosts an annual event to support the Josh Pallotta fund for addressing veteran suicides, in memory of his fellow Vermont Guardsman.

Steve and 14th Star are proud and devoted members of the St. Albans and Franklin County community, serving every way possible, such as raising enough funds to ensure eggs and milk were supplied to a local kitchen for an entire year. 14th Star's tireless efforts to give back to their community and the State shows how far a small business's impact can go.

Marcelle and I have enjoyed getting to know Steve and his wife Nicole over the years. During the Vermont Brewers Festival in 2015, Steve kindly gave me a tour of the festival and introduced me to many amazing brewers within our State. Marcelle and I have also had the pleasure of visiting 14th Star Brewery, where we were impressed not only by the creativity and quality of the beer but also the sense of community they have fostered by creating a welcoming gathering space in St. Albans. His sister and business partner, Andrea Gagner, who is the CEO of 14th Star, has also joined us in DC to participate in the annual Taste of Vermont on Capitol Hill for 2 years, and Marcelle and I have enjoyed spending time with her at the event.

I was proud to hear that Steve was chosen as the Vermont Small Business Person of the Year earlier this year. I have seen firsthand the dedication Steve has not only to his community in St. Albans but also to the veteran's community. He has an outstanding work ethic and I applaud him for all the selfless work to give back to his community. I believe Steve truly exemplifies what it means to be a small business owner in Vermont and he is very deserving of this high recognition.

#### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAZELETT CONTINUOUS CASTING

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize the success of another Vermont business, Hazelett Continuous Casting, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary of producing quality casting equipment and research. Hazelett is a true pioneer of continuous metal casting develop-

ment and research, growing from one man's dream into one of Vermont's most successful companies. As a fourth-generation, family-run company, it is fitting to look back on Hazelett's 100 years of public service and learn more about their history.

Hazelett's founder, Clarence W. Hazelett, worked tirelessly to design and develop continuous metal casting technology in 1919. Clarence's commitment was undying, his persistence to be a leader in this field led to his groundbreaking work being recognized through worldwide patents and technical publications. In 1924, Clarence established the first commercial continuous metals casting and processing company in the world, Hazelett Storage Battery Company. Upon his death, his two sons, William "Bill" and Richard, followed in his footsteps and took Hazelett a step further.

Bill took the reins from his father, becoming president of the company in 1956. Building on his father's foundation, Bill relocated the company to Colchester, VT, and renamed it Hazelett Strip-Casting Corporation. It was here that the family business grew into one of the world's leading continuous casting machine manufacturers. Bill went on to win the United States Small Business Administration National Exporter of the Year award in 2001 for his exemplary innovation and vision in building a very successful business in Vermont, boasting an employment of 145 people while accounting 70 percent of its \$23 million in sales to foreign business. Bill passed away in 2010, but his legacy lives on and continues in his son, David.

Today, with David at the helm, Hazelett has maintained their status as one of the world's leaders in continuous metal casting, expanding well beyond the Green Mountains. Hazelett's prominent presence around the globe is marked by the operation of their machines in 27 countries and the establishment of the only full-service Hazelett branch outside of the United States, Hazelett Trading in Shanghai, China. David's mission is clear: He hopes to offer the most cost-effective, environmentally friendly metals casting technology in the world. It pleases me to hear important Vermont values incorporated into Hazelett's work.

Hazelett has been an important contributor to not only the Vermont economy but the global economy. The Hazelett family and their employees have also helped build and support their home town of Colchester over this entire 100 years. A business of this magnitude in Vermont is a true gem and the years of dedication and hard work are exemplified through Hazelett's generations of leaders. I am incredibly proud of the continued dedication of each generation that has taken over the business. Congratulations to Hazelett Continuous Casting on 100 years of business, may your success continue for another 100 years.