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THE SENATE OF TEXAS
JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA
DISTRICT 20

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July 22, 2010

Chairman and Commissioners
Texas Forensic Science Commission
Sam Houston State University
College of Criminal Justice
Box 2296
816 17th Street
Huntsville, Texas 77341-2296

Dear Chairman and Commissioners:

I am writing to inform you that I disagree with the "Memorandum on the Jurisdiction of the Forensic Science Commission" that was recently circulated to you. The Commission's jurisdiction is not limited in scope to Department of Public Safety - accredited laboratories. Rather, its scope includes all forensic science analysis and procedures, which help the Commission identify best practices and eliminate the state's use of "junk science."

As the sponsor of the bill that created the Forensic Science Commission in 2005, I can assure you that the Commission was created to address the very serious concerns that the legislature had with forensic analysis that had been conducted in this state at that time.

Now - five years after the passage of that legislation - I am still concerned that Texas is not fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that our court system is properly using forensic analysis in our criminal justice system to make sure that criminals receive the appropriate punishment and wrongful convictions are prevented.

In addition, I am concerned that the functions of the Forensic Science Commission are becoming politicized, and that is unconscionable. The Commission should be focused on securing the public's trust in our criminal justice system, which is essential for our system to function properly.

The intention of the Texas Legislature in 2005 was to promote a high level of professionalism in science that is used in our criminal courts by giving experts in their fields - the Commission - the power to identify recurring problems in our courts.

Whatever actions you take tomorrow, keep in mind how your decision will impact Texas' criminal justice system in its entirety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juan 'Chuy' Hinojosa".

Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
612 NOLANA, SUITE 410-B
McALLEN, TEXAS 78504-3089
956/972-1841 • 956/664-0602 FAX

P.O. BOX 12068
CAPITOL BUILDING
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
TOLL FREE: 866/259-5016
512/463-0120 • FAX: 512/463-0229
DIAL 711 FOR RELAY CALLS

2820 SOUTH PADRE ISLAND DRIVE, SUITE 291
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS 78415
361/225-1200 • FAX: 361/225-0119