

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2001 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 857      (Delegate Vallario)  
Judiciary

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**Criminal Procedure - Admissibility of DNA Profiles - Name Change**

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This bill changes a reference in the Annotated Code of Maryland relating to the admissibility of certain DNA evidence in Maryland courts to reflect the name change of a national working group. Specifically, the name of one of the groups that establishes standards for validity of DNA profile analyses is changed from the Technical Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (TWGDAM) to the Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGDM).

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Changing the name of this reference in the Annotated Code would not affect governmental operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** A DNA profile that is introduced into evidence in a Maryland court for the purpose of proving or disproving the identity of any person must be validated according to standards established by either the TWGDAM or the DNA Advisory Board of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

**Background:** Toward the end of the 1980s, the Laboratory Division of the FBI convened a group of federal, state, and local forensic scientists to establish guidelines for the use of forensic DNA analysis in laboratories. In 1988, TWGDAM was created.

TWGDAM not only developed the guidelines which formed the basis for national quality assurance standards but also proposed the creation of a national DNA database for the storage and exchange of DNA profiles developed from crime scenes. This proposal formed the genesis of the development of the CODIS program -- software that enables federal, state, and local laboratories to store and compare DNA profiles electronically and thereby link serial crimes to each other and identify suspects by matching DNA from crime scenes to convicted offenders.

Recently, the working group has been renamed the Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGAM) to better reflect its mission. More than 30 laboratories send members to participate in SWGAM.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of State Police, Department of Legislative Services

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