

By: Hinojosa of Hidalgo

S.B. No. 1937

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the testing of evidence containing biological materials
in capital cases.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Articles 38.43(i), (j), and (k), Code of
Criminal Procedure, are amended to read as follows:

(i) Before a defendant is tried for a capital offense in
which the state is seeking the death penalty, subject to Subsection
(j), the state shall require either the Department of Public Safety
through one of its laboratories or a laboratory accredited under
Article 38.01 to perform nuclear DNA testing, in accordance with
the laboratory's capabilities at the time the testing is performed,
on any biological evidence that was collected as part of an
investigation of the offense and is in the possession of the state.
The laboratory that performs the nuclear DNA testing shall pay for
all nuclear DNA testing performed in accordance with this
subsection.

(j) As soon as practicable after the defendant is charged
with a capital offense, or on a motion by the state or the defendant
in a capital case, unless the state has affirmatively waived the
death penalty in writing, the court shall order the state, a subject
matter expert from the laboratory required to perform the testing
under Subsection (i), and the defendant to meet and confer about
which biological materials collected as part of an investigation of

1 the offense qualify as biological evidence that is required to be
2 tested under that subsection [~~Subsection (i)~~]. If the state, the
3 subject matter expert, and the defendant agree on which biological
4 materials constitute biological evidence, the biological evidence
5 shall be tested in accordance with Subsection (i). If the state,
6 the subject matter expert, and the defendant do not agree on which
7 biological materials qualify as biological evidence, the state or
8 the defendant may request the court to hold a hearing to determine
9 the issue. On receipt of a request for a hearing under this
10 subsection, the court shall set a date for the hearing and provide
11 written notice of the hearing date to the state, the laboratory
12 required to perform the testing, and the defendant. At the hearing,
13 there is a rebuttable presumption that the biological material that
14 the defendant requests to be tested constitutes biological evidence
15 that is required to be tested under Subsection (i). This subsection
16 does not in any way prohibit the state from testing biological
17 evidence in the state's possession.

18 (k) If an item of biological evidence is destroyed or lost
19 as a result of nuclear DNA testing performed under Subsection (i),
20 the laboratory that tested the evidence must provide to the
21 defendant any bench notes prepared by the laboratory that are
22 related to the testing of the evidence and the results of that
23 testing.

24 SECTION 2. Article [38.43](#), Code of Criminal Procedure, as
25 amended by this Act, applies to a capital case for which the
26 indictment was filed on or after the effective date of this Act. A
27 capital case for which the indictment was filed before the

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1 effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the
2 date the indictment was filed, and the former law is continued in
3 effect for that purpose.

4 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.