



COLORADO

**Department of
Regulatory Agencies**

Colorado Office of Policy, Research &
Regulatory Reform

**2018 Sunset Review:
Colorado Cold Case Task Force**

October 15, 2018



COLORADO

Department of
Regulatory Agencies

Executive Director's Office

October 15, 2018

Members of the Colorado General Assembly
c/o the Office of Legislative Legal Services
State Capitol Building
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Members of the General Assembly:

The Colorado General Assembly established the sunset review process in 1976 as a way to analyze and evaluate regulatory programs and determine the least restrictive regulation consistent with the public interest. Since that time, Colorado's sunset process has gained national recognition and is routinely highlighted as a best practice as governments seek to streamline regulation and increase efficiencies.

Section 24-34-104(5)(a), Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), directs the Department of Regulatory Agencies to:

- Conduct an analysis of the performance of each division, board or agency or each function scheduled for termination; and
- Submit a report and supporting materials to the office of legislative legal services no later than October 15 of the year preceding the date established for termination.

The Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform (COPRRR), located within my office, is responsible for fulfilling these statutory mandates. Accordingly, COPRRR has completed the evaluation of the Colorado Cold Case Task Force. I am pleased to submit this written report, which will be the basis for COPRRR's oral testimony before the 2019 legislative committee of reference.

The report discusses the question of whether there is a need for the program provided under Section 109 of Article 33.5 of Title 24, C.R.S. The report also discusses the effectiveness of the Colorado Department of Public Safety and staff in carrying out the intent of the statutes and makes recommendations for statutory changes in the event this regulatory program is continued by the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Salazar
Executive Director





COLORADO

Department of Regulatory Agencies

Colorado Office of Policy, Research &
Regulatory Reform

2018 Sunset Review Colorado Cold Case Task Force

SUMMARY

What is regulated?

The Colorado Cold Case Task Force (Task Force) is a Type 2 advisory committee that is located in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and charged with creating a best practices model related to cold case investigation strategies and practices.

Why is it regulated?

There are more than 1,700 cold cases throughout Colorado, and the creation of the best practices model for cold case investigation strategies and practices serves to provide training to law enforcement personnel to ultimately solve more cold cases.

Who is regulated?

The Task Force does not provide direct regulatory oversight. Instead, it serves in an advisory capacity to assist in enhancing Colorado's cold case investigation strategies and practices.

How is it regulated?

The Task Force is comprised of 16 members consisting of a broad range of participants, including, but not limited to, district attorneys, victims' advocacy organization representatives, a sheriff and chief of police, and a forensic pathologist.

What does it cost?

There are no direct costs associated with the Task Force. The best practices training related to cold case investigation strategies and practices were funded in fiscal years 11-12 through 16-17 via Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) grants. Beginning in fiscal year 18-19, POST grants will no longer be utilized to fund the program.

How many cold case trainings have there been?

Utilizing the cold case best practice model developed by the Task Force, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation has organized and facilitated many training sessions throughout the state, with approximately 20 people attending each of the trainings.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue the Task Force for 13 years, until 2032.

The Task Force provides a useful forum for individuals, including professionals within law enforcement and the public, to have an open dialogue related to cold case investigations. The Task Force also serves as a sounding board for Colorado Bureau of Investigation staff, law enforcement agencies, district attorneys and others related to improving cold case homicide investigations. Finally, the Task Force continues to provide the best practices training related to cold case investigation strategies and practices.

METHODOLOGY

As part of this review, Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform staff attended Task Force meetings, interviewed Task Force members and DPS staff, interviewed various interested parties and stakeholders, reviewed Colorado statutes and rules, and reviewed Colorado statutes.

MAJOR CONTACTS MADE DURING THIS REVIEW

City of Boulder
City of Littleton
Cold Case Task Force members
Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police
Colorado Bureau of Investigation
Colorado Department of Public Safety
County Sheriffs of Colorado
Douglas County Sheriff's Office
Families of Homicide Victims and Missing Persons
Mesa County Sheriff's Office

What is a Sunset Review?

A sunset review is a periodic assessment of state boards, programs, and functions to determine whether they should be continued by the legislature. Sunset reviews focus on creating the least restrictive form of regulation consistent with protecting the public. In formulating recommendations, sunset reviews consider the public's right to consistent, high quality professional or occupational services and the ability of businesses to exist and thrive in a competitive market, free from unnecessary regulation.

Sunset Reviews are prepared by:
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Background

Introduction

Enacted in 1976, Colorado's sunset law was the first of its kind in the United States. A sunset provision repeals all or part of a law after a specific date, unless the legislature affirmatively acts to extend it. During the sunset review process, the Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform (COPRRR) within the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) conducts a thorough evaluation of such programs based upon specific statutory criteria¹ and solicits diverse input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders including consumers, government agencies, public advocacy groups, and professional associations.

Sunset reviews are based on the following statutory criteria:

- Whether regulation by the agency is necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare; whether the conditions which led to the initial regulation have changed; and whether other conditions have arisen which would warrant more, less or the same degree of regulation;
- If regulation is necessary, whether the existing statutes and regulations establish the least restrictive form of regulation consistent with the public interest, considering other available regulatory mechanisms and whether agency rules enhance the public interest and are within the scope of legislative intent;
- Whether the agency operates in the public interest and whether its operation is impeded or enhanced by existing statutes, rules, procedures and practices and any other circumstances, including budgetary, resource and personnel matters;
- Whether an analysis of agency operations indicates that the agency performs its statutory duties efficiently and effectively;
- Whether the composition of the agency's board or commission adequately represents the public interest and whether the agency encourages public participation in its decisions rather than participation only by the people it regulates;
- The economic impact of regulation and, if national economic information is not available, whether the agency stimulates or restricts competition;
- Whether complaint, investigation and disciplinary procedures adequately protect the public and whether final dispositions of complaints are in the public interest or self-serving to the profession;

¹ Criteria may be found at § 24-34-104, C.R.S.

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- Whether the scope of practice of the regulated occupation contributes to the optimum utilization of personnel and whether entry requirements encourage affirmative action;
 - Whether the agency through its licensing or certification process imposes any disqualifications on applicants based on past criminal history and, if so, whether the disqualifications serve public safety or commercial or consumer protection interests. To assist in considering this factor, the analysis prepared pursuant to subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) of subsection (8) of this section shall include data on the number of licenses or certifications that were denied, revoked, or suspended based on a disqualification and the basis for the disqualification; and
 - Whether administrative and statutory changes are necessary to improve agency operations to enhance the public interest.

Types of Regulation

Consistent, flexible, and fair regulatory oversight assures consumers, professionals and businesses an equitable playing field. All Coloradans share a long-term, common interest in a fair marketplace where consumers are protected. Regulation, if done appropriately, should protect consumers. If consumers are not better protected and competition is hindered, then regulation may not be the answer.

As regulatory programs relate to individual professionals, such programs typically entail the establishment of minimum standards for initial entry and continued participation in a given profession or occupation. This serves to protect the public from incompetent practitioners. Similarly, such programs provide a vehicle for limiting or removing from practice those practitioners deemed to have harmed the public.

From a practitioner perspective, regulation can lead to increased prestige and higher income. Accordingly, regulatory programs are often championed by those who will be the subject of regulation.

On the other hand, by erecting barriers to entry into a given profession or occupation, even when justified, regulation can serve to restrict the supply of practitioners. This not only limits consumer choice, but can also lead to an increase in the cost of services.

There are also several levels of regulation.

Licensure

Licensure is the most restrictive form of regulation, yet it provides the greatest level of public protection. Licensing programs typically involve the completion of a

prescribed educational program (usually college level or higher) and the passage of an examination that is designed to measure a minimal level of competency. These types of programs usually entail title protection - only those individuals who are properly licensed may use a particular title(s) - and practice exclusivity - only those individuals who are properly licensed may engage in the particular practice. While these requirements can be viewed as barriers to entry, they also afford the highest level of consumer protection in that they ensure that only those who are deemed competent may practice and the public is alerted to those who may practice by the title(s) used.

Certification

Certification programs offer a level of consumer protection similar to licensing programs, but the barriers to entry are generally lower. The required educational program may be more vocational in nature, but the required examination should still measure a minimal level of competency. Additionally, certification programs typically involve a non-governmental entity that establishes the training requirements and owns and administers the examination. State certification is made conditional upon the individual practitioner obtaining and maintaining the relevant private credential. These types of programs also usually entail title protection and practice exclusivity.

While the aforementioned requirements can still be viewed as barriers to entry, they afford a level of consumer protection that is lower than a licensing program. They ensure that only those who are deemed competent may practice and the public is alerted to those who may practice by the title(s) used.

Registration

Registration programs can serve to protect the public with minimal barriers to entry. A typical registration program involves an individual satisfying certain prescribed requirements - typically non-practice related items, such as insurance or the use of a disclosure form - and the state, in turn, placing that individual on the pertinent registry. These types of programs can entail title protection and practice exclusivity. Since the barriers to entry in registration programs are relatively low, registration programs are generally best suited to those professions and occupations where the risk of public harm is relatively low, but nevertheless present. In short, registration programs serve to notify the state of which individuals are engaging in the relevant practice and to notify the public of those who may practice by the title(s) used.

Title Protection

Finally, title protection programs represent one of the lowest levels of regulation. Only those who satisfy certain prescribed requirements may use the relevant prescribed title(s). Practitioners need not register or otherwise notify the state that they are engaging in the relevant practice, and practice exclusivity does not attach. In other words, anyone may engage in the particular practice, but only those who

satisfy the prescribed requirements may use the enumerated title(s). This serves to indirectly ensure a minimal level of competency - depending upon the prescribed preconditions for use of the protected title(s) - and the public is alerted to the qualifications of those who may use the particular title(s).

Licensing, certification and registration programs also typically involve some kind of mechanism for removing individuals from practice when such individuals engage in enumerated proscribed activities. This is generally not the case with title protection programs.

Regulation of Businesses

Regulatory programs involving businesses are typically in place to enhance public safety, as with a salon or pharmacy. These programs also help to ensure financial solvency and reliability of continued service for consumers, such as with a public utility, a bank or an insurance company.

Activities can involve auditing of certain capital, bookkeeping and other recordkeeping requirements, such as filing quarterly financial statements with the regulator. Other programs may require onsite examinations of financial records, safety features or service records.

Although these programs are intended to enhance public protection and reliability of service for consumers, costs of compliance are a factor. These administrative costs, if too burdensome, may be passed on to consumers.

Sunset Process

Regulatory programs scheduled for sunset review receive a comprehensive analysis. The review includes a thorough dialogue with agency officials, representatives of the regulated profession and other stakeholders. Anyone can submit input on any upcoming sunrise or sunset review on COPRRR's website at: www.dora.colorado.gov/opr.

The functions of the Colorado Cold Case Task Force (Task Force) as enumerated in Section 109 of Article 33.5 of Title 24, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), shall terminate on September 1, 2019, unless continued by the General Assembly. During the year prior to this date, it is the duty of COPRRR to conduct an analysis and evaluation of the Task Force pursuant to section 24-34-104, C.R.S.

The purpose of this review is to determine whether the currently prescribed program should be continued and to evaluate the performance of the Colorado Department of Public Safety (DPS). During this review, DPS must demonstrate that the program serves the public interest. COPRRR's findings and recommendations are submitted via this report to the Office of Legislative Legal Services.

Methodology

As part of this review, COPRRR staff attended Task Force meetings, interviewed DPS staff, interviewed Task Force members, interviewed various interested parties and stakeholders and reviewed Colorado statutes.

Profile of Cold Case Investigations

Currently, there are more than 1,700 cold cases in Colorado. A cold case is defined in section 24-33.5-425(2)(a), C.R.S., as a homicide investigation that is open for more than three years from the date of the commission of the crime for crimes committed after 1970. Most of the cold cases are concentrated in the Denver metropolitan area; however, cold cases exist in virtually all counties throughout the state.

In an attempt to address, and ultimately improve, cold case investigations by law enforcement personnel, the General Assembly passed House Bill 07-1272 (HB 07-1272). Specifically, HB 07-1272 included the creation of the Task Force, but it also required the creation of Colorado's cold case homicide team. The cold case homicide team, which currently consists of one employee within the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI), is charged with creating a state-wide database to include each homicide investigation that meets the definition of a cold case. The database serves two purposes: it is a record of all of the unsolved homicides in Colorado and it is a potential tool for law enforcement to possibly connect multiple cold case investigations to one another.

Further, the Task Force statute requires each law enforcement agency in the state to provide information to the cold case homicide team in an effort to compile a complete database of all of the cold cases in Colorado.

However, the focus of this sunset review, as highlighted in section 24-33.5-109(9), C.R.S., is specific to the Task Force.

The Task Force was charged with a single task: review and make recommendations on best practices related to cold case homicide investigation strategies and practices,² which was initiated with a survey provided to all law enforcement agencies. The goal of the survey was to find out how many cold cases the law enforcement agencies had in their jurisdictions, what their resources were and what needs, if any, existed.

One common theme was identified from the surveys: law enforcement agencies needed training on cold case homicide investigations.

In order to facilitate the charge of the Task Force, and to address this desire for training, a curriculum development subcommittee was established to review investigation strategies and practices. The subcommittee included a variety of law

² § 24-33.5-109(6), C.R.S.

enforcement personnel, an employee of the Colorado Office of the Attorney General and an employee of Colorado State University.

A curriculum was ultimately developed by the subcommittee and it serves as the basis for a 16-hour (two-day) law enforcement training course.³ The objective of the training course is to

provide participants an overview of proven strategies for resolving previously unsolved homicide cases “cold cases” under best practice investigative processes and strategies for cold cases incorporating evidence testing and [Deoxyribonucleic Acid] DNA forensic technology.⁴

There are a variety of topics (units) that are covered in the cold case training course, which are as follows:⁵

- Why Cases Go Cold,
- Homicide Investigation Basics,
- Prosecutor’s Perspective,
- Cold Case Squads,
- National Missing Unidentified Persons System (NamUs),
- Case Selection,
- Case Review Process,
- Co-Victims,
- Case Resolution, and
- Case Scenarios.

Unit 1 - Why Cases Go Cold - provides context and understanding of why homicide cases develop into cold cases. Once an attendee completes Unit 1, he or she should be able to:⁶

- Recognize why cases go cold - including evidence issues,
- Identify victim characteristics contributing to cold case status,
- Describe agency issues that can be factors in cases going cold,
- Understand the consequences of unsolved homicides, and
- Define criminal investigation techniques.

³ Colorado Department of Public Safety. *Colorado Cold Case Task Force 2010 Annual Report*. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByqVH1SxGT4ucDRZR21zRnpZRmc/edit>

⁴ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 13.

⁵ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, pp. 7-8.

⁶ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 15.

Unit 2 - Homicide Investigation Basics - provides a review of homicide investigation and principles of crime scene forensics. Once Unit 2 is completed, an attendee should be able to:⁷

- Review homicide investigation basics,
- Identify individual agency policy on homicide investigations,
- Examine crime scene forensic principles, and
- Define courtroom presentation guidelines.

Unit 3 - Prosecutor's Perspective - provides an understanding of what the prosecution team will need to bring a cold case to successful prosecution. Once Unit 3 is completed, an attendee should be able to:⁸

- Understand what is required for district attorney (DA) collaboration,
- Understand the two differing investigation styles that drive cold cases,
- Understand the expectations required of investigators by the DA,
- Understand the importance of case evidence, and
- Realize other tools to move cases forward, such as sentencing laws.

Unit 4 - Cold Case Squads - provides an in-depth review in identifying the types and structures of cold case squads, and the necessary components of successful squads. Upon completion of Unit 4, an attendee should be able to:⁹

- Describe ideal cold case squad personnel,
- Classify cold case squad components,
- Compare innovative department squad designs, and
- Identify external resources for cold case squads.

Unit 5 - Cold Case Squads - NamUs provides information regarding the NamUs database and the specific requirements for the various levels of access to missing person and unidentified remains. Upon completion of Unit 5, an attendee should be able to:¹⁰

- Access the NamUs public website,
- Conduct searches based on specific case characteristics,
- Know how to obtain entry access to the missing person portion of the website,
- Know who to contact in order to have cases entered into the unidentified portion of the website, and
- The various resources available via NamUs.

⁷ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 29.

⁸ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 95.

⁹ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 107.

¹⁰ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 151.

Unit 6 - Case Selection - provides an in-depth review of the recommended process for case review of “cold case” files. Upon completion of Unit 6, attendees should be able to:¹¹

- Describe the triage theory and process for cold case files,
- Define solvability factors for triage review,
- Identify cold case file components, and
- Analyze the various cold case review forms for the recommended process.

Unit 7 - Case Review Process - provides an overview of the recommended process for initial case review of cold case files. Unit 7 enables attendees to:¹²

- Examine various case review processes,
- Identify and recommend steps for organizing cold case files,
- Classify “gaps in information” for cold case files, and
- Recommend a process for assessing existing evidence.

Unit 8 - Co-Victims - identifies best practices in victim service protocols for cold case investigations. Upon completion of Unit 8, attendees should be able to:¹³

- Recognize victims/co-victims characteristics,
- Describe local resources for advocacy,
- Identify model programs for cold case victim service protocols,
- Examine legal and ethical obligations and protocols, and
- Review additional resources for dealing with families of victims.

Unit 9 - Case Resolution - describes the process and recommended strategies of resolving cold cases through suspect identification, apprehension, interview and interrogation and prosecution. Unit 9 teaches attendees to:¹⁴

- Define strategies for locating and securing suspects,
- Analyze recommended interview and interrogation skills for cold case suspects,
- Identify suspect apprehension tactics,
- Categorize methods of pro-active investigations, and
- Review DNA analysis methods.

¹¹ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 169.

¹² *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 271.

¹³ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 321.

¹⁴ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 443.

Unit 10 - Case Scenarios - provides attendees with the opportunity for application of cold case theories through simulated case scenarios. Unit 10 enables attendees to:¹⁵

- Analyze case situations and apply best practice investigative strategies,
- Interpret evidence available and recommend further testing options, and
- Present to other attendees an application of course theory from a scenario case.

In addition to completing its single task, to review and make recommendations on best practices related to cold case homicide investigation strategies and practices, and in keeping with the spirit of the mandate of the Task Force, the Task Force was also instrumental in facilitating the CBI-created Cold Case Review Team (Review Team). Specifically, the Task Force was consulted and provided input as to the purpose and role of the Review Team.

The Review Team is a 35-member team comprised of experts from a variety of associations and professions, including, but not limited to, the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police, County Sheriffs of Colorado, district attorneys and investigators, and the Colorado Organization for Victims Assistance.

The purpose of the Review Team is to serve as a “different set of eyes” concerning cold case investigations. In order for the Review Team to ultimately review a specific cold case, law enforcement agencies must request assistance from the Review Team. For example, a police department or sheriff’s office determines that it would be helpful for a particular cold case to be reviewed by the Review Team. The agency presenting the case meets with the Review Team during the review process, receives the suggestions and participates in the discussion of alternatives or options for solving the case.

Typically, the Review Team first meets two to four times per year. In calendar years 2015 through June 2018, the Review Team convened a total of eight times. During the referenced time period, the Review Team reviewed a total of 14 cold cases.

Additionally, the Task Force, in 2014, presented the idea of creating a Cold Case Playing Card Program to the Department of Corrections. The program was ultimately approved and playing cards featuring homicide victims, long-term missing persons, and unidentified remains cases were distributed in state prisons in Colorado in the hope that prisoners would be able to provide leads in any cases. To date, more than 500 tips have been received related to cold cases.

¹⁵ *Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies & Best Practices: Participant Manual*, p. 499.

Legal Framework

History of Regulation

The Colorado Cold Case Task Force (Task Force) was established in 2007 through House Bill 07-1272. The Task Force is charged with reviewing cold case homicide investigation strategies and practices and making recommendations on best practices.¹⁶

Prior to the creation of the Task Force, Colorado did not have a comprehensive best practices model related to cold case homicide investigations. The Task Force created the two-day training course: Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies and Best Practices.

The Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform completed a sunset review of the Task Force program in 2011. The report contained two recommendations:

- Continue the Task Force for seven years, until 2019; and
- Amend the current membership of the Task Force to include a forensic pathologist.

Both recommendations were adopted into the Task Force statute.

Legal Summary

The Task Force is created in section 24-33.5-109, Colorado Revised Statutes. The Task Force consists of 16 members, as follows:¹⁷

- The Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Public Safety, or his or her designee;
- The Attorney General, or his or her designee;
- Two members who represent a statewide victims advocacy organization, appointed by the Governor;
- One sheriff and one police chief, both appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- Two representatives from victims' families, both appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- Two representatives from victims' families, both appointed by the President of the Senate;
- A forensic pathologist who is appointed by the Governor; and

¹⁶ § 24-33.5-109(6), C.R.S.

¹⁷ § 24-33.5-109(2), C.R.S.

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- Three district attorneys, or their designees, each appointed by the Executive Director of the Colorado District Attorneys Council:
 - One district attorney from an urban judicial district,
 - One district attorney from a suburban judicial district, and
 - One district attorney must be from a rural judicial district.

The Task Force is required to meet, at a minimum, four times per year.¹⁸

The Task Force is charged with reviewing cold case homicide investigation strategies and practices, including making recommendations on best practices.¹⁹

¹⁸ § 24-33.5-109(5), C.R.S.

¹⁹ § 24-33.5-109(6), C.R.S.

Program Description and Administration

The Colorado Cold Case Task Force (Task Force), which is created in section 24-33.5-109, Colorado Revised Statutes, is a Type 2 advisory body that is required to review cold case homicide investigation strategies and practices and make recommendations on best practices.

The Task Force is required, in statute, to meet at least four times per year. The Task Force maintains a quarterly meeting schedule.

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) within the Colorado Department of Public Safety utilizes one full-time employee to provide administrative oversight to the Task Force, which includes, among other duties, the administration of the Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies and Best Practices two-day training course.

The Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies and Best Practices training course has been approved by the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board.²⁰ In fiscal years 11-12 through 16-17, the CBI was awarded POST grants ranging in award amounts of between \$8,000 to \$15,000 per year. Beginning in fiscal year 18-19, POST grants are no longer utilized to fund the training.

Cold Case Homicide Investigation Strategies and Best Practices training courses are available twice per year, usually in January and June. The training courses have been held in a variety of locations throughout Colorado, including: Denver, Grand Junction, Greeley, Ft. Collins and Pueblo. According to CBI staff, approximately 20 people have completed the training course each session.

²⁰ Colorado Department of Public Safety. *Colorado Cold Case Task Force 2010 Annual Report*. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0ByqVH1SxGT4ucDRZR21zRnpZRmc/edit>

Analysis and Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Continue the Colorado Cold Case Task Force for 13 years, until 2032.

The first sunset review criterion asks whether regulation is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public. The Colorado Cold Case Task Force (Task Force) was created by the General Assembly to establish a best practices model for reviewing cold cases in Colorado. The Task Force consists of 16 members, representing a diverse mixture of expertise, including, but not limited to, law enforcement officials, victims' advocates and prosecutors.

Although the Task Force does not have direct regulatory oversight, it serves as a Type 2 advisory body and its purpose is to enhance public protection by improving cold case investigations in Colorado. In fact, the Task Force was charged with a single task: review and make recommendations on best practices related to cold case homicide investigation strategies and practices.²¹

The Task Force continues its charge of offering a best practices model related to cold case investigations. Utilizing the cold case best practices model developed by the Task Force, the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has organized and facilitated a two-day training course. The CBI has held many training sessions at locations throughout the state, with approximately 20 people attending each of the trainings.

There are three main reasons the Task Force should be continued by the General Assembly. First, even though the best practices model was developed by the Task Force and ultimately utilized by the CBI as a two-day training for interested parties, such as law enforcement officials, there is a need to continually refine and possibly re-develop the best practices model. Because the Task Force is already created in statute, it is efficient to use if and when revisions to the best practices model are needed.

Additionally, the Task Force should be continued because it provides a useful forum for individuals, including professionals within law enforcement and the public, to have an open dialogue related to cold case investigations. Specifically, the Task Force has enabled stakeholders to express their concerns and frustrations with certain aspects of cold case investigations, particularly in the area of law enforcement's communication with victims' families. Also, there have been differing perspectives concerning investigation techniques, and the Task Force provides a setting for discussion and clarification of issues related to cold case investigations.

²¹ § 24-33.5-109(6), C.R.S.

The Task Force also serves as a sounding board for CBI staff, law enforcement agencies, district attorneys and others related to improving cold case homicide investigations. The diverse representation on the Task Force encourages a constructive and robust exchange of ideas on improving cold case investigations.

The Task Force provides the only official avenue for the families or victims to share their concerns and perspective with a diverse representation of professionals, including law enforcement and district attorneys, to advocate for advancement of their cases.

As such, the General Assembly should continue the Task Force for 13 years, until 2032. Doing so will ensure that victims' families and the law enforcement community have a forum to address and improve cold case investigations for the foreseeable future.