

As Introduced

**136th General Assembly
Regular Session
2025-2026**

S. B. No. 480

Senator Patton

To enact section 313.124 of the Revised Code to
require a coroner to preserve and store a DNA
sample for future genetic analysis when the
coroner performs an autopsy and is unable to
determine a cause of death.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 313.124 of the Revised Code be
enacted to read as follows:

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Sec. 313.124. (A) As used in this section:

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(1) "Standard collection card" means a filter paper matrix
designed for the collection, stabilization, and long-term
storage of dried blood spots for DNA preservation.

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(2) "Unexplained death from apparent natural causes" means
a death where, after an autopsy, the coroner is unable to
definitively establish a structural, anatomical, or
toxicological cause of death or where a suspected underlying
genetic cardiovascular, metabolic, or neurological condition
cannot be confirmed without molecular analysis.

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(B) (1) If a coroner performs an autopsy on a decedent and
determines the cause of death to be an unexplained death from
apparent natural causes, the coroner shall collect a blood

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sample from the deceased on a standard collection card. 21

(2) The coroner shall preserve and securely store the 22
standard collection card in a manner that maintains the 23
integrity of the biological specimen for future clinical genetic 24
analysis. The coroner shall retain the card within the property 25
or custody of the coroner's office for at least eighteen years 26
from the date of collection. Upon the expiration of the 27
eighteen-year period, the coroner may dispose of the card in 28
accordance with section 313.123 of the Revised Code unless a 29
written extension is requested by the executor designated 30
pursuant to division (C) of this section. If a written extension 31
is requested by the designated executor, the coroner shall 32
maintain the card for an additional ten years, after which the 33
designated executor may submit an additional written request for 34
an extension. 35

(C) At the time of collection, the coroner shall provide 36
the decedent's next of kin, as specified in division (B) of 37
section 2108.81 of the Revised Code, with a standardized form to 38
designate an executor of genetic material. The designated 39
executor holds the exclusive authority to approve or deny the 40
release of the preserved genetic material. 41

(D) (1) Any immediate or extended family member of the 42
deceased may request access to the standard collection card for 43
the purpose of medical or genealogical genetic analysis. 44
Immediate and extended family members include a surviving 45
spouse, biological and legally adopted children, step children, 46
biological and legally adoptive parents, step parents, 47
biological grandchildren and legally adopted grandchildren, 48
siblings of the whole or half blood and legally adopted 49
siblings, biological and legally adoptive grandparents, first 50

cousins, step siblings, aunts, uncles, great grandparents, and 51
great grandchildren. 52

(2) The coroner shall release the standard collection 53
card, or an appropriate sample thereof, upon receiving a written 54
request from the family member accompanied by signed and 55
notarized approval of the designated executor. 56

(3) The coroner's office is not financially responsible 57
for the processing, shipping, or clinical analysis of the 58
genetic material. All arrangements and costs associated with the 59
genetic testing are the sole responsibility of the individual 60
requesting the material. 61

(E) The department of health, in collaboration with the 62
Ohio state coroners association, shall establish a standing 63
committee of medical examiners, forensic pathologists, and 64
clinical geneticists. This committee shall do both of the 65
following: 66

(1) Compile, maintain, and annually update a public 67
directory of accredited and reliable genetic testing 68
laboratories; 69

(2) Publish standardized guidelines for families outlining 70
best clinical practices for processing postmortem genetic 71
material and interpreting the resulting medical data. 72

(F) (1) Beginning five years after the effective date of 73
this section and every five years thereafter, the department of 74
health, in collaboration with the Ohio state coroners 75
association, shall conduct a formal review of the collection, 76
storage, security, and distribution policies established under 77
this section. 78

(2) Beginning five years and three months after the 79

effective date of this section and every five years thereafter, 80
the department of health shall submit a report to the general 81
assembly in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code 82
recommending statutory or administrative adjustments based on 83
evolving economic, scientific, technological, and practical 84
considerations. 85

(G) The director of health shall adopt rules in accordance 86
with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code as necessary to implement 87
this section. 88