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[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

September 8, 2009

Sheriff Leroy D. Baca  
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department  
4700 Ramona Blvd.  
Monterey Park, CA 91754

Re: Funding for rape kit backlog reduction

Dear Sheriff Baca:

On behalf of Human Rights Watch and our Los Angeles constituency, we are writing to thank you for including the necessary funding for rape kit testing and staffing in your FY 2010 budget.

We were heartened to receive a letter from Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky dated September 1, 2009, detailing your decision to allocate \$2.3 million of your budget to rape kit testing, and an additional \$700,000 to hire crime lab staff necessary to increase rape kit testing capacity. We are also pleased that Supervisor Yaroslavsky intends to ask the County to find matching funds in its FY 2011 budget for your rape kit backlog testing program.

While this funding represents a major step forward, we urge you to develop and regularly report on a comprehensive plan that addresses not only testing the backlog, but also developing investigative leads that result in increased arrests and prosecutions as well as an appropriate mechanism for notifying victims of the testing and progress in their cases.

We know that the budget process this year has been especially difficult and that you face tough choices. But there are some core government responsibilities that are non-negotiable, no matter the cost; we believe that bringing justice to victims by testing backlogged rape kits is such a responsibility and greatly appreciate your commitment to this important task. Your commitment makes it much more likely that rape victims in Los Angeles County will see justice in their cases.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Tofte*  
Sarah Tofte  
Researcher, US Program  
Human Rights Watch

*Tiffany Siart*  
Tiffany Siart  
Director, Southern California  
Human Rights Watch