

## **Governor Signs Attorney General's Digital Crime Lab Bill**

### **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

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**OLYMPIA** - Attorney General Rob McKenna today hailed the signing of a bill that allows his office, in concert with the Washington State Patrol, to lay the groundwork for the creation of a digital crime lab. "We're moving forward with bringing state crime-fighting fully into the digital age," McKenna said. "Thanks to the strong support of legislators, state law enforcement will be better prepared to use technology to gather the evidence they need to bring online predators and other criminals to justice." Digital devices can frequently help track down suspects in cases involving terrorism, homicide, illegal narcotics, stalking, child pornography, harassment or robbery. But the Attorney General's [Youth Internet Safety Task Force](#) reports that local jurisdictions are not equipped to handle the variety and complexity of technology used to commit modern crimes. To address this challenge, the AGO requested legislation ([SB 5184/HB1248](#)) directing the state to create a blueprint for building a digital forensic crime lab to be housed at the Washington State Patrol.

Virtual digital crime labs include the tools required for examinations of digital evidence, connected via a high-speed network. These labs enable investigators, experts, analytical tools, and evidence to be located in different locations. A virtual lab may be securely accessed over the Internet. Digital evidence can include encrypted data, electronic communications, data storage devices, cell phone photos, audio, and video. The AGO and the State Patrol will now evaluate the costs and effectiveness of state-of-the-art technologies used by digital forensic labs in other states, and report back to the Legislature in six months. The Senate bill was sponsored by former Whatcom County Sheriff Sen. Dale Brandland, R-Bellingham, and [others](#). A companion bill in the House was sponsored by retired Seattle Police Sergeant Rep. Al O'Brien, D-Mountlake Terrace and [others](#). The measures passed unanimously in both chambers.