January 9, 2023

Honorable Viola Davis
State Representative
404-D Coverdell Legislative Office Building
Atlanta, GA 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
             House Bill (LC 39 3514)

Dear Representative Davis:

This bill would establish a handwriting analysis section within the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's (GBI) Division of Forensic Sciences. The bill does not have an effective date.

While O.C.G.A. § 35-3-151(2) requires GBI to provide analysis of questioned documents, GBI discontinued specifically offering handwriting analysis in 2013 due to low demand, availability of private vendors, and lack of qualified personnel. To add a handwriting analysis section, GBI would need to hire additional personnel and purchase equipment. As detailed in **Table 1**, the bill is estimated to result in one-time costs of $292,650 and on-going costs of $499,161.

Table 1: Division of Forensic Sciences Handwriting Analysis Cost

Cost Category	One-Time Cost	On-Going Cost
Personnel	$146,394	$497,161
Equipment	$146,256	--
Proficiency Tests	--	$2,000
Total Cost	**$292,650**	**$499,161**

Note: GBI does not currently have an estimate for the cost of accreditation.

An overview of the cost categories is below.

- *Personnel*: GBI estimated the need for three crime lab scientists and one forensic technician. One-time costs include office equipment (e.g., computers, monitors), as well as instructors to train the new scientists in the handwriting analysis discipline. On-going costs primarily consist of salaries and benefits.

- *Equipment*: The handwriting analysis section would incur one-time costs for analytical equipment, such as a VSC 8000/HS QDE Workstation, an ESDA 2 Electrostatic Imaging System, and other lab equipment.

- *Proficiency Tests*: Individual tests costs approximately $300, and GBI estimated the total testing cost to be $2,000 per year.

Respectfully,

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

Kelly Farr, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/KF/mm