

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2457**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Bloom**

February 19, 2016

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An act to amend Section 27521 of the Government Code, relating to autopsy.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2457, as introduced, Bloom. Autopsy: electronic image systems.

Existing law requires a coroner to perform or cause to be performed an autopsy on a decedent, for which an autopsy has not already been performed, on request of specified relatives. Existing law requires a postmortem examination or autopsy that is conducted at the discretion of a coroner, medical examiner, or other agency to include certain procedures, including, among others, taking available fingerprints and palm prints and a dental examination including dental charts and dental X-rays, as specified. Existing law authorizes the postmortem examination or autopsy of the unidentified body or remains to include full body X-rays.

This bill would authorize the use of an electronic image system, including, but not limited to, an X-ray computed tomography scanning system, to fulfill the requirements of a discretionary postmortem examination or autopsy or the requirements of a postmortem examination or autopsy required by other law.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 27521 of the Government Code is  
2 amended to read:

3 27521. (a) A postmortem examination or autopsy conducted  
4 at the discretion of a coroner, medical examiner, or other agency  
5 upon an unidentified body or human remains is subject to this  
6 section.

7 (b) A postmortem examination or autopsy shall include, but  
8 shall not be limited to, the following procedures:

9 (1) Taking of all available fingerprints and palm prints.

10 (2) A dental examination consisting of dental charts and dental  
11 X-rays of the deceased person’s teeth, which may be conducted  
12 on the body or human remains by a qualified dentist as determined  
13 by the coroner.

14 (3) The collection of tissue, including a hair sample, or body  
15 fluid samples for future DNA testing, if necessary.

16 (4) Frontal and lateral facial photographs with the scale  
17 indicated.

18 (5) Notation and photographs, with a scale, of significant scars,  
19 marks, tattoos, clothing items, or other personal effects found with  
20 or near the body.

21 (6) Notations of observations pertinent to the estimation of the  
22 time of death.

23 (7) Precise documentation of the location of the remains.

24 (c) The postmortem examination or autopsy of the unidentified  
25 body or remains may include full body X-rays.

26 (d) *An electronic image system, including, but not limited to,*  
27 *an X-ray computed tomography scanning system, may be used to*  
28 *fulfill the requirements of subdivision (b) or of a postmortem*  
29 *examination or autopsy required by other law, including, but not*  
30 *limited to, Section 27520.*

31 ~~(d)~~

32 (e) The coroner, medical examiner, or other agency performing  
33 a postmortem examination or autopsy shall prepare a final report  
34 of investigation in a format established by the Department of  
35 Justice. The final report shall list or describe the information  
36 collected pursuant to the postmortem examination or autopsy  
37 conducted under subdivision (b).

38 ~~(e)~~

1 (f) The body of an unidentified deceased person ~~may~~ shall not  
2 be cremated or buried until the jaws (maxilla and mandible with  
3 teeth), or other bone sample if the jaws are not available, and other  
4 tissue samples are retained for future possible use. Unless the  
5 coroner, medical examiner, or other agency performing a  
6 postmortem examination or autopsy has determined that the body  
7 of the unidentified deceased person has suffered significant  
8 deterioration or decomposition, the jaws shall not be removed until  
9 immediately before the body is cremated or buried. The coroner,  
10 medical examiner, or other agency responsible for a postmortem  
11 examination or autopsy shall retain the jaws and other tissue  
12 samples for one year after a positive identification is made, and  
13 no civil or criminal challenges are pending, or indefinitely.

14 ~~(f)~~

15 (g) If the coroner, medical examiner, or other agency performing  
16 a postmortem examination or autopsy with the aid of the dental  
17 examination and any other identifying findings is unable to  
18 establish the identity of the body or human remains, the coroner,  
19 medical examiner, or other agency shall submit dental charts and  
20 dental X-rays of the unidentified deceased person to the Department  
21 of Justice on forms supplied by the Department of Justice within  
22 45 days of the date the body or human remains were discovered.

23 ~~(g)~~

24 (h) If the coroner, medical examiner, or other agency performing  
25 a postmortem examination or autopsy with the aid of the dental  
26 examination and other identifying findings is unable to establish  
27 the identity of the body or human remains, the coroner, medical  
28 examiner, or other agency shall submit the final report of  
29 investigation to the Department of Justice within 180 days of the  
30 date the body or human remains were discovered. The final report  
31 of investigation shall list or describe the information collected  
32 pursuant to the postmortem examination or autopsy conducted  
33 under subdivision (b), and any anthropology report, fingerprints,  
34 photographs, and autopsy report.

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