



M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 20, 2008

M. Jodi Rell
Governor

State of Connecticut

Testimony Supporting HB 5034:
An Act Concerning DNA Collection from Certain Arrestees and Convicted Persons

Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 5034, An Act Concerning DNA Collection from Certain Arrestees and Convicted Persons. This bill is an important part of my initiative to protect the safety of our residents and to identify and hold criminals accountable.

Under current law, offenders are not required to give a DNA sample until they are being released from prison. The bill that I originally proposed would have required persons charged with a Class A or B felony to provide a DNA sample at time of arraignment. My office has received a great deal of opposition to the requirement that a sample be provided prior to conviction. In response to these comments, I am willing to support a bill that would require offenders who are sentenced to prison for a felony conviction or certain serious misdemeanor convictions to provide a DNA sample when they enter prison.

In any case, having the DNA sample much earlier in the criminal justice process will give us access to key identifying information in some cases years before we otherwise would have had it. These samples will be checked against information that was recovered at crime scenes and may allow us to solve some of our longstanding unsolved criminal mysteries.

My proposal makes it a Class D felony for a person to refuse to give a DNA sample, or to give a sample under an assumed name or identity.

And let me assure you that this bill will have a real, practical effect in Connecticut. I have recently been informed by Commissioner Danaher of the Department of Public Safety that based upon a DNA match from a sample provided by a person arrested for sexual assault in New York City, the Greenwich Police Department was able to identify and prosecute the perpetrators of a sexual assault committed in Greenwich in 1991. This case, which had been unsolved for over sixteen years, was finally resolved as a result of a DNA sample match.

My proposal will help us to identify and apprehend more criminals than ever before. By employing this sophisticated technology we will give our law enforcement officers more effective tools in their battle against crime and we will be more confident that those arrested based upon a DNA match are guilty of the crimes with which they have been charged. This bill will help us keep our citizens safe and will ensure that justice in the State of Connecticut is swift and sure.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.

STATE CAPITOL, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

TEL: (860) 960-1840 FAX: (860) 524-7396

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