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Testimony of
Representative Raymond Kalinowski
In Support of Raised Bill 692

Before the Judiciary Committee
March 20, 2008

Good morning Chairpersons Lawlor and McDonald, Ranking Members O'Neill and Kissel and Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am here today to testify in support of Raised Bill Number 692: An Act Requiring DNA Testing of Certain Arrested Persons.

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for raising this important bill. Raised Bill Number 692 allows DNA testing of persons arrested for Class A and B felonies prior to their release from custody. Expansion of DNA testing in Connecticut will provide law enforcement with the tools they need to properly identify serious repeat criminals. Earlier this session, we saw a bill similar to Raised Bill 692 come through the Public Safety Committee, on which I serve as Ranking Member. Unfortunately, that bill did not make it out of committee. Those opposed to the concept have stated that obtaining DNA sampling is an intrusive violation of one's right to privacy and a government body has no right to maintain such a database because is the exclusive property of an individual. The courts however have always held that the state may create and store photographic and fingerprint records that establish a permanent record of the identity of all arrested individuals. If the police are allowed to keep fingerprints or a photograph as a biometric identifier, it is hard to see why they cannot keep a DNA profile properly limited to identifiable characteristics. The DNA profile is a series of numbers – I believe there are 13 numbers that have no meaning other than being a molecular sequence. It is very much like a social security number or a passport number. Access would be limited to law enforcement personnel investigating specific crimes where DNA trace evidence has already been found. It is my hope that the Judiciary

Committee will pass the legislation before you today in order to allow this concept to move forward.

I have heard in recent months appeals from my constituents to make changes to Connecticut's laws so that they may feel safer in their own homes. Allowing DNA testing of persons who have been arrested for Class A and B felonies is a step in the right direction. The use of DNA testing by law enforcement officials allows for timely and accurate identification of both criminals and those who have been wrongfully incarcerated. Expansion of Connecticut's DNA database will help law enforcement solve crimes which may otherwise go unsolved and free those who have been wrongfully convicted.

Eleven other states have enacted legislation requiring DNA sampling for some felony arrests. DNA sampling upon the arrest of individuals will aid crime victims and bringing closure to cold cases. The longer the legislature waits to pass this important measure, the longer the trail may be of crimes which could have been prevented.

I strongly urge this committee to pass Raised Bill 692. It is our role as legislators to protect the public by giving law enforcement the proper tools necessary to effectively fight crime.

Thank you.