

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

Three strikes proposal could improve public safety



Last July's home invasion murders in Cheshire, and the recent home invasion and murder in New Britain have appalled and outraged everyone in Connecticut - and rightly so. The tragic events brought home to all of us just how vulnerable we are to the violent criminals among us.

The reality of such horrendous crimes taking place in our backyards galvanized widespread support for reforms to help prevent more Connecticut families from being victimized by repeat offenders. I have consistently supported calls for the state legislature to take action to correct the flaws in our criminal justice and parole systems that in part enabled the senseless Cheshire and New Britain murders to take place.

The results of my most recent legislative survey also indicate strong support for a three strikes law that would lock-up, without parole, serious and habitual career criminals. Nearly 90 percent of all respondents indicated support for a three strikes law. The aim of any three strikes legislation is to target the worst of the worst in a very well-reasoned, targeted manner. We do not want to tie the hands of judges and take away all judicial discretion, however, when a criminal is convicted of three heinous, violent crimes, they are a threat to society and should be locked-up in order to ensure public safety.

The most recent three-strikes proposal was defeated 25-16 in a largely party-line vote in the Judiciary Committee. The bill defeated would have amended the persistent dangerous felony offender statutes by requiring that persons convicted of three dangerous felonies serve life in prison without the possibility of release.

It would also have required prosecutors to pursue a third conviction under persistent dangerous felony offender provisions for repeat violent offenders who can be sentenced to life in prison without eligibility for parole or publicly state why they are not doing so. Many times, prosecutors can use the current persistent dangerous felony offender provisions but fail to do so.

During a January Special Session, I voted in favor of legislation that: creates a new crime of home invasion; makes someone convicted of second degree burglary or home invasion ineligible for parole until he or she has served 85 percent of their sentence; makes major changes to the parole process, including reconfiguration of the Board of Pardons and Paroles and placing new limits on eligibility of parole and furloughs and establishes

global positioning system (GPS) monitoring of additional parolees and requires additional staffing for monitoring.

Public safety is one of the primary responsibilities of state government, and I will continue to work towards tougher laws that will result in safer communities.

As always, if you have any questions or would like more information about this topic, you can call my office at (860) 240-8700, or e-mail me at penny.bacchiochi@cga.ct.gov.