

House Republican Press Release

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Reps Hamzy, Burns Vote for Criminal Justice Reforms



Majority Democrats Reject House GOP 'Three Strikes' Measure Targeting Repeat Violent Criminals

Legislation that passed the state Senate Tuesday and the state House of Representatives early Wednesday morning will increase penalties for home invasions and close some loopholes in state criminal justice laws, but a proposal that would have imposed tougher penalties on repeat violent offenders was rejected by the majority Democrats, state representatives William A. Hamzy, and Ron Burns said today.

“I supported the bill that passed the House because it will give families more protection from home invasions like the one in Cheshire last summer and because it will make it more difficult for hardened, violent criminals to be released on parole after serving only a portion of their sentences,” said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District.

“What troubles me is that the majority Democrats rejected our ‘three strikes and you’re out’ proposal, which would have put three-time violent offenders behind bars for life, where they could not threaten law-abiding citizens. Our proposal would have targeted only dangerous repeat offenders whose past criminal histories have shown they are incapable of being rehabilitated. These individuals belong behind bars – and our three strikes proposal would have kept them there and saved innocent lives,” Representative Hamzy said.

“I voted for the legislation we approved today because it will help Connecticut families feel confident that they can once again go to bed at night without having to worry about violent criminals breaking into their homes and threatening their lives,” said Representative Burns, R-77th District. “The three strikes amendment the Republicans proposed would have further strengthened the bill. Unfortunately, the majority Democrats ignored the 45,000 people who signed a petition last year that supported a three strikes law by leaving it out of the bill that passed Tuesday.”

The House Republican three strikes amendment would have required that after a third conviction of a dangerous felony, a violent criminal would be sentenced to a term of life imprisonment without the possibility of release, the legislators said.

The dangerous felonies would have included murder other than a capital felony, manslaughter, arson, kidnapping, robbery in the first or second degree, robbery involving an occupied motor vehicle, assault constituting a felony, sexual assault in the first or third degree, home invasion, burglary in the first or second degree, or stalking in the first degree, the legislators said.

The state House and Senate, meeting in special session nearly six months to the day after a Cheshire home invasion and triple murder shocked the state, adopted many of the provisions recommended by the governor's task force and supported by most legislators.

They include:

- Creating a new crime of home invasion.
- Requiring individuals convicted of second degree burglary or home invasion to serve at least 85 percent of their sentences.
- Altering the makeup, qualification requirements and appointment process for the state Board of Pardons and Paroles, and prohibiting parole hearings from being conducted unless the board's chairperson certifies that all pertinent information has been provided to the board or is unavailable.
- Eliminating the parole administrative review procedure, making it more difficult for dangerous violent offenders to be released from prison prematurely.
- Requiring global positioning system monitoring of 300 additional parolees.
- Requiring the Judicial Branch to post certain arrest warrant information on the internet.