

## House Republican Press Release

March 19, 2008  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER CAFERO SAYS DEMOCRATS FAILED PUBLIC BY REJECTING THREE STRIKES BILL**



HARTFORD – House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., today ripped Democrats for rejecting a proposed Three Strikes bill for violent repeat criminals that surviving members of the Cheshire family called for in the wake of last year’s triple murder.

The Judiciary Committee voted 25-16 against the provisions to impose mandatory life sentences for criminals convicted three times of violent crimes such as murder, rape or assault. All Republicans on the committee voted for the Three Strikes bill.

“The public now knows that the Democratic lawmakers who thwarted the public outcry over this tragedy also refused to heed the pleas of the family members who have repeatedly called for mandatory life sentences for dangerous, repeat criminals,” Cafero said. “We will continue to work to achieve our goals of making Connecticut streets and homes safer from those who continually show disregard for the public’s safety.”

He added that the Democrats who control the legislature were never serious about getting tough on crime. The Democrats threw up every obstacle and smokescreen to divert the public’s attention on this critical issue. But when they had a chance to make Connecticut safer, they failed,” Cafero said.

Members of the Petit family have stated publicly they want tough mandatory sanctions for those convicted three times and charged as persistent felons and testified last week before the Judiciary Committee that they supported the Republicans’ position. Cafero said the differences between the two sides could not be any clearer.

“The Democrats sat on their hands on the opening day of the legislature in February when the Governor called for tougher sanctions. And today they defied the public’s will,” Cafero said.

He predicted that the full House and Senate will be tested again this spring because Republicans will force the issue in a full debate and up or down vote.

The bill would have allowed prosecutors leeway not to charge repeat offenders as persistent felons but would have to state for the record why. Judges would have no discretion but to impose mandatory life sentences for persistent felons.