

House Republican Press Release

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REP. ROWE SUPPORTS TOUGHER REPEAT FELON LAWS



LEGISLATURE TO CONVENE SPECIAL SESSION IN LATE JANUARY

HARTFORD –State Rep. T. R. Rowe, R-Trumbull, today pledged support for strengthening the state’s “Three Strikes” Law in the wake of the July Cheshire home invasion that left three people murdered. Legislative leaders have promised to hold a special session to revise laws impacting repeat offenders and the parole system in late January. Governor M. Jodi Rell also recently unveiled several proposals for the session.

Rep. Rowe, a member of the Legislature’s Judiciary Committee, said he will support a package introduced by the House Republican Caucus.

“The Cheshire tragedy brought to light profound flaws in the state’s legal system,” said Rep. Rowe. “The Legislature has had ample time to determine how to better protect citizens. Public safety should be a top priority of government and the package I will be supporting will help ensure the most dangerous criminals spend more time behind bars and are strictly monitored should they be released.”

Highlights of the House Republican proposal are:

1. **Enact a Strong Three Strikes Law** that eliminates judicial discretion and requires life imprisonment for a third serious felony conviction, keeping career criminals in jail and out of our neighborhoods.
2. **Reclassify Burglary of a Residence (Home Invasion) as a Violent Crime**
 - a. Force dangerous felons who commit this crime to serve 85% of their jail sentences before applying for parole (under current law, the majority of these criminals are released after serving only half of their sentences).
 - b. Impose a mandatory minimum 5-year prison sentence on criminals convicted of burglary in the first or second degree.
3. **Strengthen Connecticut’s Persistent Offender Law** by following the state Supreme Court’s recommendation to grant juries the power to determine enhanced sentences on criminals they deem to be dangerous persistent offenders.

4. **Reform the State's Parole Process**
 1. Transfer the Board of Parole from the Dept. of Corrections to the Dept. of Public Safety
 2. Increase membership on the Board of Parole
 3. Require transcripts and other information pertaining to a candidate for parole be provided to Board of Parole members at least three business days prior to the candidate's hearing
 4. Require released offenders to report to their local police station to be photographed and documented within one week of their release
 5. Require more information on the court record at the time of sentencing

5. **Require Serious Criminals to Wear GPS Tracking Devices** on their person at all times as a condition of their release.