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**SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REQUIRE
DNA TESTING FOR ALL CONVICTED FELONS AND SEXUAL PREDATORS**

JEFFERSON CITY -- The Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday heard testimony on legislation sponsored by Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee's Summit, which would allow Missouri to test the DNA of all individuals convicted of a felony or sexual offense in order to assist federal, state and local law enforcement with the prosecution in solving crimes.

"The idea of a DNA profiling system has been around for years, but I really think that it's time for the Missouri Legislature to take action on this matter," said Bartle. "It's one of those irrefutable facts that people who are convicted of committing a crime are likely to commit more crimes. This bill is an attempt to bring public policy in line with this reality. Right now approximately 60,000 people are in Missouri's prison or probation and parole systems. Many of these people will commit crimes in the next 10 years."

DNA, the chemical that embodies a person's genetic programming, can be found almost everywhere. People shed a constant torrent of dead skin cells. Criminals leave blood when breaking and entering; they shed hair and skin cells in fights, deposit saliva on glasses and leave sweat stains in head bands. From only a few cells in such sources, enough DNA can be extracted to identify the owner.

Under Senate Bill 1000, any individual who is convicted of a felony or any sexual offense must provide a sample of DNA for profiling analysis.

"It's a simple process, just taking a sample swab from someone's mouth," Bartle said. "Many crimes are not solved because investigators simply ran out of clues. This just offers law enforcement one more powerful tool."

The cost of administering this test would be paid through a mandatory fee assessed on any person who has been convicted of a qualifying offense.

All DNA records and biological material retained in the DNA profiling system would remain a closed record, and would be available only to law enforcement.

Jackson County Prosecutor Mike Sanders worked closely with Bartle in developing this legislation, which is based on a Virginia law passed in 1990. Since that time, more than 1,200 cold cases have been solved.

“That’s 1,200 violent predators who will no longer terrorize communities in Virginia,” Sanders said during testimony on behalf of SB 1000. “We need to use this new, powerful tool to both exonerate innocent people and to put guilty people behind bars.”

The Judiciary Committee unanimously approved SB 1000 and sent it to the Senate floor for debate.