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**MISSOURI SENATE GIVES FIRST-ROUND APPROVAL TO
LANDMARK LEGISLATION REQUIRING DNA TESTING
OF ALL CONVICTED FELONS**

JEFFERSON CITY -- The Missouri Senate has given first round approval to landmark legislation that will make it easier for law enforcement to solve crimes. Sponsored by Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee's Summit, Senate Bill 1000 will require DNA testing of all individuals convicted of a felony or sexual offense.

"DNA technology has enabled us to solve crimes that have gone unsolved for decades, and has allowed us to free those wrongly convicted," said Bartle.

"Unfortunately, our laws have not kept pace with scientific advances."

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

The DNA sample will be taken with a swab from the convicted felon's mouth. 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.

According to the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney, Mike Sanders, "DNA technology is becoming a fundamental resource for our criminal justice system as it helps to ensure accuracy, rapidity and fairness. This legislation will bring Missouri in line with over 30 states that already have similar legislation."

Law enforcement agencies from throughout Missouri already utilize the state's DNA database as a crime-fighting tool.

“DNA cold hits have resulted in convictions in several murder and rape cases in Jackson County alone,” said Bartle. “The addition of thousands of new samples will undoubtedly lead to the closure of dozens of unsolved cases all over Missouri.”

Recently, Jackson County prosecutors used a cold hit from the database to charge a convicted sex offender with the 1986 rape and robbery of a Kansas City woman. The man charged in the crime is currently serving 30 years for a 1987 sodomy conviction. It was the oldest case solved by the DNA database in the county.

“It’s important to remember that this DNA database not only puts the guilty behind bars, it also frees the innocent,” Bartle said. “We’ve all heard the stories of men and women who have spent 20 or 30 years behind bars for a crime they did not commit, and it was only with DNA evidence they were able to win their freedom.”

SB 1000 will also provide restitution for those exonerated as the result of DNA evidence.

After a final Senate vote, this bill will be sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.