

Weekly Report  
Week of 1-24

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## **MISSOURI'S NEW LAW REQUIRING DNA TESTING OF FELONS IDENTIFIES RAPIST DUE TO BE RELEASED THIS MONTH**

For the past year I have been updating you on the progress of a bill I sponsored that would require all felons in Missouri to give a DNA sample to the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSPH) to be cross-checked against evidence collected from unsolved crimes. This bill was passed by the legislature last year and became law. The new program got off the ground earlier this month when law enforcement officials began testing the backlog of thousands of Missouri inmates convicted of felony charges.

Until now I have only been able to tell you that I thought, based on the experiences of other states, that this new law would help protect our communities and catch criminals who have for too long hidden from their crimes. However, earlier this week my office was given the green light to announce that the new law, that has only been operational for a matter of days, is truly working. As technicians at the MSHP crime lab were testing some of the first DNA samples taken from inmates, the computer database found a match with evidence collected from a rape and sodomy case that had until now gone unsolved.

The inmate identified for the unsolved rape was scheduled to be released from prison later this month and would have escaped testing altogether if the law had not gone into effect when it did. It is chilling to think that in just a few days this violent rapist and sodomist would have walked out the door of the prison back into society perhaps to commit further heinous crimes.

Since the first of the year, the MSHP Crime Lab has collected samples from 688 offenders at state correctional institutions who are now eligible for collection under the new "all felon" law. So far, 364 samples have been analyzed and uploaded to the computer database known as CODIS to be cross-checked for matches with DNA evidence already on file. In addition to the hit on the rape case, the new system has also turned up a match on an unsolved burglary case.

I am gratified by the quick results of the DNA testing law so far and I have high expectations that many more unsolved crimes will finally be able to be prosecuted thanks to this new system. Justice can now be done in this case and one more violent predator will be kept off our streets.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.state.mo.us) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.