



Office of Jason Crowell State Senator

The Crowell Connection

Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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DNA Testing Update:

Making Our Communities Safer/Solving Cold Cases

Since the mid-1980's the use of DNA has positively identified or positively excluded criminal suspects during investigations and prosecutions. Nationwide, state laws vary on which offenders can be added to each state's database, but a trend has developed of opening the databases to a broader range of criminal offenders.



While I served in the Missouri House of Representatives as the Majority Floor Leader, I was the House sponsor of legislation that in the past year and a half has solved hundreds of cold cases in Missouri. The bill, which became law in 2005, ex-

Panded the state DNA Profiling System by requiring the Missouri State Highway Patrol to keep DNA samples of *all* Missouri felony offenders (previously, the program sampled only certain violent or sexual offenders). These DNA samples are shared among police departments throughout the state and nation, via the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), and are used to match DNA taken from crime scenes. More than 400 positive matches have been made under the expanded DNA collection system, and that number keeps growing. We are seeing an influx of old cases being solved and we are just scratching the surface now. Investigators are solving cases previously thought unsolvable and justice, although delayed is being administered.

Just in the past two weeks, the DNA all-felon testing program has led to an arrest in a five-year-old cold case in Cape Girardeau. Ontario Reed, 23, was recently charged with forcible rape and forcible sodomy of a woman who was 22 years old at the time. Reed, who was in prison for an unrelated robbery charge in another county, was not a suspect in the 2001 violent rape and sodomy case until the Cape Girardeau Police Department matched Reed's DNA to that belonging to the rapist. According to the Cape Girardeau County Prosecutor, Morley Swingle, Reed will now face trial in Cape Girardeau County on these new charges.

This heinous crime might never have been solved if law enforcement didn't have access to the suspect's DNA. When this alleged violent offender goes to trial, the evidence will speak for itself and justice will be served. The ongoing success of Missouri's new DNA Profiling System goes to show how lawmakers and law enforcers can work together to keep our communities safe and ensuring that justice prevails. But most importantly it provides some closure to the victims of these awful assaults.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

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