



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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DNA Profiling

JEFFERSON CITY – Technology is becoming entwined in the fabric of our lives, from cell phones and text messaging to GPS navigation systems in our vehicles to electronic medical records. Technological advances in forensic science have become important tools in law enforcement as well.

In the summer of 2004, the governor signed Senate Bill 1000, which requires all individuals who plead guilty or are convicted of felonies or any sexual offense to provide a sample of their DNA. The act also called on the state to create a DNA Profiling System, designed to help federal, state and local law enforcement agencies with the identification, investigation and prosecution of individuals.

In 2005, the first year statistics were compiled on the effectiveness of SB 1000, 144 investigations in Missouri were assisted by the new DNA database. In 2006, law enforcement officials reported 716 “hits” on the DNA database. Of that total, 630 hits were a direct result of SB 1000. So far this year, investigators have had 132 hits on the DNA database, and 107 of those are due to the requirement that all felons submit a DNA sample.

While the new law enforcement tool has been effective in assisting current investigations, it also has helped to clear a number of cold cases. For example, in 1997 a 15-year old Columbia girl was sexually assaulted in her bedroom. During the investigation, a DNA sample was collected from the victim and sent to the Highway Patrol crime lab for analysis, but no match was found. The sample was later entered into the Combined DNA Index System, which compares unidentified DNA samples with known samples.

Last year, the highway patrol lab told the Columbia Police Department's major crimes unit they had a hit on the DNA sample and that it belonged to a St. Louis man who had lived in Columbia at the time of the assault. The suspect implicated himself during an interview with police and was arrested.

DNA evidence also led to the conviction this year of a Kansas City man charged in the murders of six women. Some of the crimes date back to the mid-1980s.

The process works in reverse, too. Last month, a St. Louis man was freed after spending ten years in prison for carjacking. The judge ordered the man released from prison after DNA analysis failed to link him to the 1996 crime.

Fairness is a hallmark of our criminal justice system. The DNA database has become a valuable tool in ensuring those who commit crimes are punished, while those who are falsely accused can rest assured the truth will set them free.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.