



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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## New DNA Law Already Making a Difference

A new law that expands the state's DNA profiling system is already having a profound effect on the ability of law enforcement to solve crimes—and it's only been on the books since Aug. 28.

This year, the Legislature expanded on Missouri's already-successful DNA profiling system with the passage of HB 152, which I handled in the Senate. House Bill 152 takes the DNA program a step further by requiring any person who is age 17 or older and who is arrested (not just convicted) for certain violent felonies, burglaries and sexual offenses to provide a DNA sample for the database. To protect individuals' civil liberties, lawmakers took measures to ensure that if the charges are dropped after a person is arrested, the DNA sample would be destroyed and all DNA records expunged. This expansion of the law is already making the DNA database an even more effective tool for law enforcement.

By way of background, five years ago, I worked to pass a crime-fighting bill (Senate Bill 1000) that requires all convicted felons in Missouri to submit DNA samples. Since its inception, this program has helped law enforcement solve numerous cases by providing concrete evidence as to who committed a crime. Before the enactment of SB 1000, many of these criminals—including violent murderers and rapists—would never have been caught. Since SB 1000 became law, the program has provided investigators with around 2,500 hits. More than 220 homicide investigations and 540 sexual assault cases have been aided by the expansion of the law.

For example, in Jackson County, a DNA match last year linked a convicted drug offender to an unsolved rape that occurred in 2000. Without his DNA sample, the case

most likely would never have been solved and he would have walked away to potentially hurt someone else. The creation of this program was a victory for law enforcement and for all law-abiding Missourians, and now, expanding Missouri's DNA database to include arrestees will help solve more crimes, will help prevent more crimes and will lead to more innocent people being exonerated.

The new law has been in effect for a little more than a month and already it has led authorities to four "cold hits"—a rapist, two burglars and a car thief. We expect the expansion of the DNA profiling system to continue to build upon the program's initial success and lead to the arrest of many more criminals who have so far managed to keep their identities secret.

As of May 2009, 17 states and the federal government have enacted legislation requiring DNA collection from an arrestee or indicted individual. Expanding the database has greatly enhanced the ability of these states and the federal government to solve crimes. I expect that here in the Show-Me State, we will see the same results.

If you have any 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.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278. You can also visit my Senate website at [www.senate.mo.gov/bartle](http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle).

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