



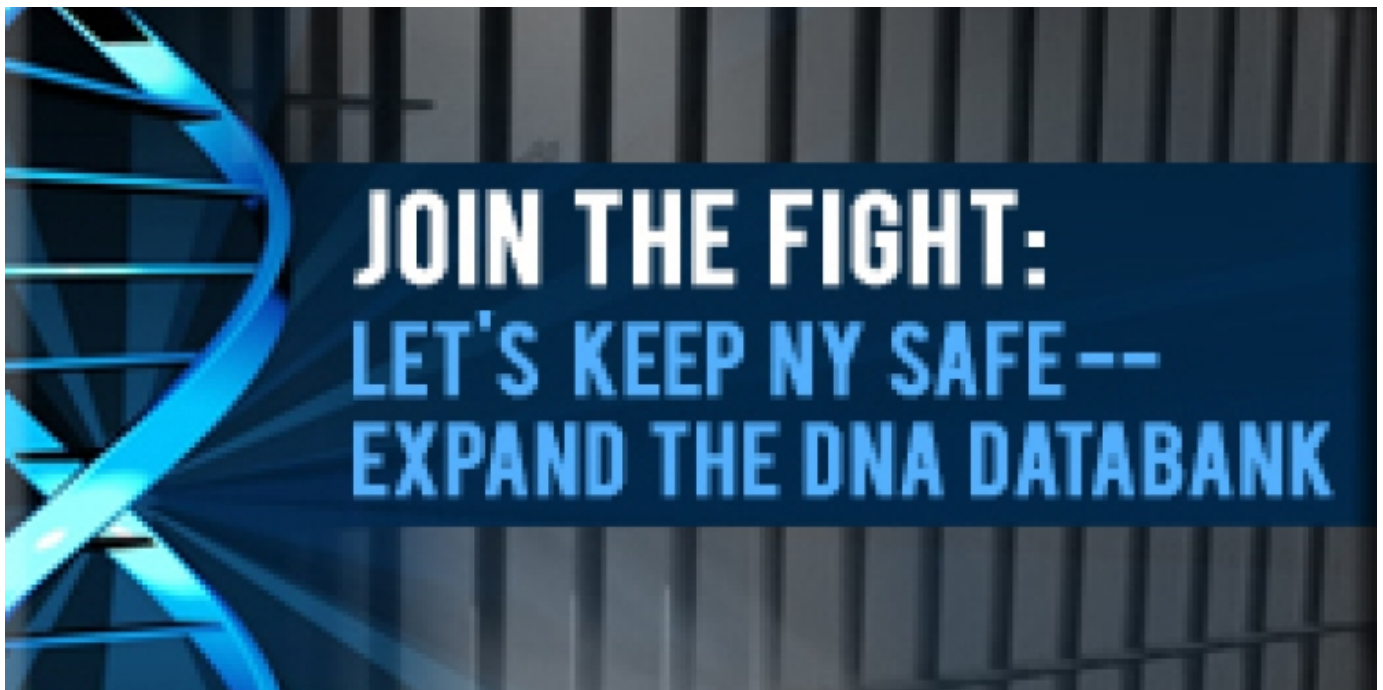
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senate approves expanded DNA databank, O'Mara co-sponsors 'modern-day crime-fighting tool'

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 1, 2012

| ISSUE: **CRIME**



Albany, N.Y., February 1—The New York State Senate has approved legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) that leading law enforcement agencies across New York State have called an essential modern-day crime-fighting tool.

The approved legislation (S.5560) calls for the largest expansion of the state's DNA databank since it was created in 1994. The Senate legislation mirrors an expansion plan recently proposed by New York Governor Andrew Governor Cuomo to require people convicted of all felonies, as well as all misdemeanors in the penal law to submit DNA samples. Currently in New York, DNA is only collected in approximately 46 percent of crimes.

“This action would bring New York State more fully into the modern era of fighting crime. DNA is recognized as the modern-day equivalent of a fingerprint,” said O’Mara. “It’s strongly supported by law enforcement and victims advocacy groups as a key addition to New York’s criminal justice system for apprehending and prosecuting serious criminals, and as a deterrent to violent crime.”

Under existing law, only criminals convicted of a penal law felony or 36 misdemeanor crimes within the penal law are required to submit DNA samples. The legislation O’Mara co-sponsors would expand that list to include all felonies in state law and every penal law misdemeanor.

Governor Cuomo released the following statement following today’s action by the Senate, “Today the New York State Senate passed the DNA Databank Expansion Bill, an important step in protecting New Yorkers and modernizing the state’s criminal justice system. This critical crime fighting resource embraces technology to help protect the innocent and convict the guilty...I call on the Assembly to do the same so I can sign this bill into law immediately.”

The proposed expansion would add about 46,000 individual DNA samples a year to the databank. It’s a move supported by numerous law enforcement organizations statewide, including the New York State Sheriffs Association, District Attorneys Association of the State of New York, the New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, the New York State Troopers PBA, and others

Since its inception, DNA stored in the databank has been used to identify perpetrators in about 10,000 crimes, including 900 murders and 3,500 sexual assaults. Since 2006, when the DNA databank was expanded to include 36 misdemeanors, law enforcement agencies have used the information to convict 1,460 criminals.

O’Mara said that he and his Senate colleagues have launched an online “Join the Fight” petition drive to rally public support for the action.

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