



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senator Flanagan Supports Passage of DNA Databank Expansion

JOHN J. FLANAGAN February 2, 2012

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Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) recently voted for the largest expansion of the state's DNA databank since it was created in 1994. The legislation mirrors the DNA databank expansion plan proposed by Governor Andrew Cuomo in his recently introduced Executive Budget and would require those who are convicted in New York State of a felony and a misdemeanor under penal law to submit DNA samples to the authorities.

Under the current standard, DNA collection is required in less than half of the crimes committed in New York State. While those required to submit DNA samples includes those convicted of every penal law felony and 36 misdemeanor crimes in penal law, the legislation supported by Senator Flanagan would expand that list to include all felonies in state law and every penal law misdemeanor.

It is projected the expansion would add about 46,000 individual DNA samples a year to the databank.

"The DNA databank helps convict those who victimize our fellow New Yorkers while clearing the names of those wrongly convicted and it is essential that our state utilize it fully.

Expanding it will provide our law enforcement with a more effective tool to keep our community safe and it is vital that the Assembly join with the Senate and Governor Cuomo by passing this legislation," stated Senator Flanagan.

“As a crime fighting tool, DNA is the 21st Century equivalent of a fingerprint,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “Senate Republicans fought to create the databank 18 years ago and we have successfully worked to expand it because it is the most powerful law enforcement tool to catch and prosecute criminals and protect victims. The Senate is partnering with the Governor to expand the databank and we have strong support from the law enforcement community and victims advocacy groups, and I hope the Assembly will join us in passing this measure to improve the safety of our citizens and communities.”

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.

The DNA databank expansion bill proposal is supported by law enforcement organizations across the state, 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, Downstate Coalition for Crime Victims, Joyful Heart Foundation, the Safe Horizon victim assistance organization and many other law enforcement groups throughout the state.

Maile M. Zambuto, Chief Executive Officer of the Joyful Heart Foundation, a crime victims assistance organization, said: "Since the legislature last expanded the Databank in 2006, there have been 953 DNA matches in sexual assault cases. Each of those matches can represent an opportunity to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes, give survivors the justice they deserve and spare thousands of New Yorkers the trauma and pain of sexual violence. We hope that the full legislature will join together to make a difference for survivors and the safety of our communities."

“The DNA evidence collected in sexual assaults and other cases, does not have much value unless it can be directly tied to a perpetrator. The expansion of the DNA Databank will help law enforcement apprehend those committing crimes and bring justice to those who have been victimized. Sexual abuse and other victims of violent crime have to have confidence that every crime fighting tool available is being used to bring them closure, and I hope the Assembly will join the Senate and Governor Cuomo in making it a reality in our state,” stated Laura A. Ahearn, Executive Director of Parents for Megan’s Law and the Crime Victim Center.

Residents who would like to join Senator Flanagan in calling on the Assembly to provide this important crime fighting tool to law enforcement in New York State should [click here](#) to make sure their voice is heard.