Legislature & Governor Approve Expanded Dna Databank

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO   March 16, 2012

Senator John A. DeFrancisco (R-I-C, Syracuse) announced legislation that will implement the largest expansion of the State's DNA databank since it was first created in 1994, will become law.

The databank expansion, which has been agreed to by Governor Andrew Cuomo and the State Assembly, will help close thousands of unsolved cases, bring justice to crime victims, help prevent dangerous criminals from committing additional crimes, and help to exonerate the innocent.

"Fingerprints have been an important tool relied on by law enforcement agneices. DNA is a more accurate and reliable method to help solve crimes, prove guilt, and exonerate the innocent," said Senator DeFrancisco.

The Senate Republican Majority has led the effort to expand the databank, garnering strong public backing for the proposal through a series of on-line petitions and public events. Several thousandcitizens from communities across the state signed on in support of the measure.

The Senate previously approved a DNA databank expansion bill last year with the strong support of district attorneys and crime victims' advocates from throughout the state. Governor Andrew Cuomo also included a similar measure as part of his 2012 Executive Budget, and the Senate passed a bill in January that mirrored his proposal.

The new legislation requires anyone convicted of a felony or penal law misdemeanor to provide a DNA sample -- dramatically expanding the information pool used by law enforcement and prosecutors.

Since its inception, the State's DNA databank has transformed criminal investigations and prosecutions to make them more accurate and effective, in addition to helping exonerate the innocent.

However, up to this point DNA has only been collected from fewer than half of convicted criminals because the previous law did not include certain crimes. This hampered the ability of law enforcement to solve crimes, and enabled some criminals to remain free to commit additional acts of violence.

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