

House Republican Press Release

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**REP. FREY SUPPORTS CALL FOR SPECIAL SESSION TO
STRENGTHEN PERSISTENT OFFENDER LAWS, THREE
STRIKES POLICY AND PAROLE PROCESS**



*“Proposals to Stop Future Tragedies, Similar to
those Crimes in Cheshire”*

RIDGEFIELD– State Representative John Frey of Ridgefield, along with the House and Senate Republicans offered legislative reforms aimed at toughening jail sentences on Connecticut’s most serious repeat offenders.

Republicans called on the Democratic supermajority to convene a special session of the General Assembly no later than October 23 to strengthen Connecticut’s persistent offender laws, reclassify burglary of a residence as a violent crime, fix the state’s parole processes, and enact a true Three Strikes policy- one that eliminates judicial discretion and requires life imprisonment for a third serious felony conviction.

Rep. Frey said, “With the tragedy in Cheshire still fresh in our minds, the legislature needs to look for ways to improve our justice system and strengthen our protection against violent predators. Ridgefielders and residents throughout Connecticut have a right to feel secure in their homes and I am determined to do all I can to preserve that right.”

The Connecticut State Supreme Court on Tuesday struck down part of Connecticut’s current persistent offender law, finding the law unconstitutional. The court provided direction on just how to address the portions of the current law that it found unconstitutional. The Supreme Court’s decision ordered that the jury, not the judge, decide if Arnold Bell, a lifetime criminal most recently convicted of assault for shooting a New Haven police officer, be required to serve a longer sentence.

Rep. Frey said “I am elected first and foremost to protect and make the citizens of Connecticut safe. These common sense proposals accomplish that goal. Persistent offenders should be kept off the streets and not be allowed parole after a third serious felony conviction.”

Highlights of the Republican proposal are:

1. **Enact a Strong Three Strikes Law** that eliminates judicial discretion and requires life imprisonment for a third serious felony conviction, keeping career criminals in jail and out of our neighborhoods.
2. **Reclassify Burglary of a Residence (Home Invasion) as a Violent Crime**
 - a. Force dangerous felons who commit this crime to serve 85% of their jail sentences before applying for parole (under current law, the majority of these criminals are released after serving only half of their sentences).
 - b. Impose a mandatory minimum 5-year prison sentence on criminals convicted of burglary in the first or second degree.
3. **Strengthen Connecticut's Persistent Offender Law** by following the state Supreme Court's recommendation to grant juries the power to determine enhanced sentences on criminals they deem to be dangerous persistent offenders.
4. **Reform the State's Parole Process**
 1. Transfer the Board of Parole from the Dept. of Corrections to the Dept. of Public Safety
 2. Increase membership on the Board of Parole
 3. Require transcripts and other information pertaining to a candidate for parole be provided to Board of Parole members at least three business days prior to the candidate's hearing
 4. Require released offenders to report to their local police station to be photographed and documented within one week of their release
 5. Require more information on the court record at the time of sentencing
5. **Require Serious Criminals to Wear GPS Tracking Devices** on their person at all times as a condition of their release.