

House Republican Press Release

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REP. FREY SUPPORTS THREE STRIKES LEGISLATION



HARTFORD- Representative John Frey, R-111 along with House Republican Leader Lawrence F. Cafero Jr., this week urged passage of three strikes legislation that would require three time dangerous felons to serve life in prison without the possibility of release.

House Bill 5915: *An Act Concerning Persistent Dangerous Felony Offenders*, would upon a person's third conviction of a dangerous felony, that person should spend the remainder of his or her life in prison. Currently, the judge may choose a sentence up to sixty years in prison if a person is convicted as a persistent dangerous felony offender. The bill was heard before the Judiciary Committee last week.

"When criminals commit a third violent crime, it is time to say 'enough is enough' and put them behind bars for life to prevent them from terrorizing, maiming or killing again," said Rep. John H. Frey.

"The time to reform these fatally flawed laws has long since passed. What happened in Cheshire cannot be rationalized but we must insist on tougher laws to make sure that dangerous felons are kept behind bars and not serving relatively small fractions of their sentences," Frey said.

The bill would say that if a person is eligible to be charged as a persistent dangerous felony offender, and the prosecutor chooses not to charge that person as such, the prosecutor must state in open court the reason for not bringing the charge. Right now, prosecutors have the discretion to decide whether to charge a person as a persistent offender, and we have heard through previous testimony that often times they are deciding not to bring this charge.

The Department of Corrections identified 265 incarcerated persons who were eligible for an enhanced sentence under the Persistent Dangerous Felony Offender statute but were never charged as such. These 265 people are currently serving sentences ranging from seven months to sixty years. None of these persons are serving life sentences without the possibility of release.

"Repeat violent offenders are hardened criminals who are almost certain to offend again if allowed back on the streets," added Rep. Frey.

