

House Republican Press Release

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Reps Hamzy, Burns: Dems' Persistent Dangerous Offenders Measure No Substitute for Three Strikes Law



Republican Resolve forces Majority Dems to Pass Semi-tough Anti-Crime Bill

A Democrat measure aimed at persistent dangerous offenders that passed the state House of Representatives Friday is marginally tougher than their earlier proposals but still fails to provide for mandatory life sentences for career criminals convicted of three violent felonies, state representatives William A. Hamzy and Ron Burns said today.

Both legislators voted for a Republican 'three strikes and you're out' proposal similar to GOP proposals that were killed by the majority Democrats earlier this year before voting for the weaker Democrat bill. The House Republican 'Three Strikes' measure was defeated on a mostly party-line vote.

The Democrat bill (Senate Bill 671) would authorize a judge to double the penalties for certain violent felony offenses following a second violent crime and triple the penalty after a third offense - up to a maximum of life in prison for a violent felon. The measure, which passed the state Senate early Thursday morning, received final legislative approval by the House Friday and was sent to Governor Rell to be signed into law.

"While the Democrats' anti-crime bill is an improvement over the proposals they were offering earlier this year, it still fails to live up to its promises and is no substitute for the three strikes law we have been advocating since last summer's home invasion murders in Cheshire," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District. "It does not provide for mandatory sentences for repeat violent offenders and it gives prosecutors too much discretion on whether to seek the enhanced penalties it provides. The bill is okay as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough to give the people of Connecticut the protection they need from dangerous career criminals. Unfortunately, given the Democrat majorities in the state House and Senate, this semi-tough bill is probably the most we could have expected from them."

"I'm disappointed but not surprised that the majority Democrats did not deliver on the kind of lengthy mandatory minimum sentences we wanted for repeat violent felony offenders," said Representative Burns, R-77th District. "Although it is marginally tougher than the anti-crime bill we enacted in January, it does not compare with our three strikes and you're out proposal, which Democratic legislators have repeatedly rejected. However, even this watered-down version of our three strikes proposal would not have been possible had it not been for our determination not to let our three strikes proposal

die. We kept bringing our bill back, kept the issue before the public, and forced the majority Democrats to act. The bill we passed tonight is the result.”