

## House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

### Crime and Punishment . . . and...



*By State Representative John J. Ryan*

This is not a column on Dostoevsky's great psychological novel, but I hope that you noticed that the General Assembly, in the Special Session devoted to this purpose, responded to the uproar generated by the recent horrific Cheshire home invasion murders, and by an overwhelming margin, passed a series of criminal justice reform measures. Rather than print a lengthy dissertation on what happened, you might want to take a look at these 2 succinct, but comprehensive summaries on the Governor's website, <http://www.ct.gov/governorrell/site/default.asp>, "Gov. Rell Signs Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform Package Into Law" (1.25.08) and "Gov. Rell Lifts Ban on Paroles".

Editorial comment that I have seen on the new law (very briefly, a tough new home invasion law coupled with a wide range of reforms and improvements to the parole process) have been positive. Frankly, it is a bit unusual for the Legislature to move this (relatively) quickly, and public sentiment seemed all in favor of the changes. It seems reasonable to think that with the upcoming regular session commencing almost immediately, if there is any minor tweaking or revising that has to be done to the new provisions, there is time to do so.

There is a bit of bad news, however, at least from the viewpoint of the Governor (a view that I and legislative Republicans share) that we missed an excellent opportunity to also add a workable "3 strikes" provision to our criminal laws while taking these other steps. Unfortunately, this became a political matter with the 'supermajority' party and a "3 strikes" provision failed in the State Senate. I view this as the same situation as last year's new provision on the eminent domain issue: we passed a comprehensive new law, but we missed the chance to do more. Maybe this topic, certainly worthy of action, can be revisited in the regular session?

So our next columns will be taking a look at the commencement of the new Session on Wednesday February 6, but first, 3 quick items to consider:

- **State surplus jumps (again...):** with all the news about a possible recession, media hyperbole over 'chaos on Wall Street', did you see the news item that the latest surplus

projection is up an additional \$163 Million (to a new estimate of \$263 Million+).....hmm.

- **Sheff case (still) crawling along:** every few years, we are reminded that this litigation continues to drag along inexorably, but someday something will happen. The real topic, the sad state of public education in the 'big cities' of our state, despite the repeated application of 100's of millions of \$\$ on an annual basis, needs to be seriously addressed.

- **Former Gov. Rowland gets job in Waterbury:** speaking of "crime and punishment", we can now look forward to an unending series of columns and media-frenzy on the topics of "this is intolerable!" vs. "everyone deserves another chance/he has done his time". As we say, only in Waterbury.....

And is Spring ever coming?

As always please feel free to contact me with your concerns and issues. As your state representative, it is my job, and my priority to represent you and to make sure that your needs and concerns are addressed at the capitol. You can write to me at Room 4200, Legislative Office Building, and Hartford, CT 06106-1591, send me e-mail at [John.Ryan@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:John.Ryan@housegop.ct.gov) or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.