

House Republican Press Release

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SAFE AT HOME!



By John E. Stripp

Last July's home invasion murders in Cheshire appalled and outraged nearly everyone in Connecticut.

The crime brought home to all of us just how vulnerable we are to the violent criminals among us and galvanized widespread support for reforms to help prevent more Connecticut families from being victimized by repeat offenders.

Our judicial system had failed to discharge its legal obligation to provide state parole officials sentencing information that would have kept the suspects in the Cheshire murders locked up and unable to prey on innocent people.

An existing 'three-strikes' law which is riddled with loopholes - and commonly used to persuade career criminals to plead guilty to lesser offenses than to put them away for life was highlighted.

This demonstrated once again that chronic violent offenders often cannot be transformed into model citizens through 'rehabilitation' and early release from prison. Are we just giving these repeat offenders more opportunities to destroy the lives of people like Dr. William Petit and his wife and two daughters?

I will be supporting a House Republican measure designed to address the faults in our criminal justice and parole systems that became obvious in the wake of the Cheshire home invasion murders.

Our proposal is a comprehensive one that I believe addresses those issues.

First this would, require a life sentence in prison without the possibility of release for people convicted of a violent felony who have two or more prior convictions for dangerous felonies.

Additionally, first and second degree burglary would be added to the list of felonies that can form the basis for a finding of persistent dangerous felony offender status. This would increase the number of repeat offenders who would be subject to longer prison sentences and community supervision.

The proposal would increase the mandatory minimum sentences for first and second degree burglary and third degree burglary with a firearm and require global positioning system monitoring for certain burglary offenders released on probation or conditionally discharged into communities.

Finally, our proposal provides legal protection to people who use force to defend themselves and their families from criminals who unlawfully and forcefully enter their homes. The “Castle Doctrine” as it is known says a homeowner should be able to protect their family and home. This will shift the burden of proof for people who use self-defense during a home invasion. When the families of Connecticut go to sleep at night they have the right to expect that they are safe from criminal home invasion. This proposal does that!

For more information on the House Republican proposal go to the non-partisan, Office of Legislative Research website. Here is the link: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/rpt/2007-R-0648.htm>

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.Stripp@housegop.ct.gov or call my office toll-free at 1-800-842-1423.