

House passes DNA statute of limitations bill

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SALEM, Ore. — The House of Representatives on Thursday passed HB 3263 to extend the statute of limitations for certain sex crimes if the defendant is identified on the basis of DNA sample comparisons. Since the bill is retroactive to include many past assaults, the measure will allow law enforcement and victims to pursue justice against many dangerous sexual criminals.

“This bill truly seeks justice for victims because it extends the statute of limitations where a DNA sample was collected, and at a later time the offender is identified on the basis of that sample,” said Rep. Andy Olson (R-Albany), a retired State Police member and chief co-sponsor of HB 3263. “Because DNA evidence is highly reliable as a biological identifier, it’s appropriate to extend the statute of limitations where the collected evidence can be used to solve a serious crime.”

The need for the bill came to light when Richard Troy Gilmore, the “Jogger Rapist,” was nearly paroled by the state. Under current law, prosecutors were not able to convict Gilmore of additional crimes because the statute of limitations had expired. Some of Gilmore’s victims testified in support of HB 3263 when the bill was being considered by the House Judiciary Committee.

HB 3263 applies to sex crimes including first degree rape, first degree sodomy, first degree unlawful sexual penetration and first degree sexual abuse. The bill is retroactive to past assaults as long as the crimes’ current statute of limitations haven’t expire. During the 2007 session, the Legislature voted to extend the statute of limitations for these sexual crimes to 25 years.

“HB 3263 strengthens the law by enabling law enforcement to use DNA to prosecute those who victimized innocent people many years ago,” said Rep. Wayne Kreiger (R-Gold Beach), a retired State Police member and chief co-sponsor of HB 3263. “This bill is a credit to the strong leadership of Rep. Jeff Barker, a fellow retired police officer who joined us in co-sponsoring this important measure.”

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