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Prosecutors Thank Rep. Bauer, Sen. Houchin, Rep. Steuerwald for Passage of DNA Bill

INDIANAPOLIS (April 6, 2017) – Felony arrestees in Indiana will be required to submit a DNA sample to law enforcement thanks to the passage today of Senate Bill 322 by the Indiana House.

Indiana prosecutors have a long list of sponsors to thank, including Sen. Erin Houchin, Rep. Greg Steuerwald and Rep. Patrick Bauer, for their ownership of the bill that requires every person arrested for a felony to submit a DNA sample. The bill passed the Indiana Senate on February 28, so now awaits the signature of Governor Eric Holcomb.

A Boone County murder last year resulted in a quick arrest because DNA at the scene matched a sample from the state of Ohio. When Sen. Houchin announced her intention of sponsoring DNA legislation, Boone County Prosecutor Todd Meyer said, "Taking DNA samples of convicted felons has proved effective in solving crime and making our Indiana communities safer as a result. Indiana implemented this measure almost 11 years ago. It was the right thing to do then and the right thing to do now is to pass legislation that authorizes law enforcement to take a DNA sample from a felony offender at the time of his arrest. This tool has already proven itself to be effective in solving crime in this state, despite the absence of such a law presently." (Note: A criminal charge is merely an accusation. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.)

"Senate Bill 322 will provide law enforcement and prosecutors another valuable tool to do their jobs in protecting our communities and getting criminals off the streets," said Sen. Erin Houchin (R-Salem). "DNA profiling is an accurate, widely used tool. I am confident this will lead to more criminals being held responsible for their crimes and provide peace for victims and their families."

"DNA sampling is remarkably cost-effective," said State Rep. B. Patrick Bauer (D-South Bend). "Analysts have estimated that DNA sampling in Indiana will save \$60 million a year in tax money because of sizable reductions in judicial system expenditures. However, the most important aspect of DNA sampling is the ability to prevent the rape or murder of an innocent person. You cannot put a price on the life of a mother to her child, a daughter to her parents or a wife to her husband. This law will prove to be one of the most important pieces of legislation passed by the Indiana General Assembly in decades."

On the passage of SEA 322, State Rep. Greg Steuerwald (R-Avon) said, "Across Indiana and throughout the country, we have seen how helpful DNA samples can be for law enforcement when they are attempting to connect crimes in different states and identify and prosecute the most heinous offenders," Steuerwald said. "It is a powerful tool that can be used to exonerate the innocent and prevent some of the worst types of crime such as sexual assault and murder. After working on this issue for several years, it's encouraging to see the support of fellow legislators as we aim to make our communities safer for all Hoosiers."

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