



M. JODI RELL GOVERNOR

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HARTFORD, CT 06106

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 21, 2007

Contact: Rich Harris
860-524-7313
Rich.Harris@ct.gov

Governor Rell Highlights New Law Eliminating Statute of Limitations in Rape Cases with DNA Evidence

Governor M. Jodi Rell today highlighted a new law that eliminates the statute of limitations on sexual assaults that can be prosecuted with the use of DNA evidence, calling the change a “major step forward for crime victims in our state.”

Under the change, six of the most serious sexual assault crimes – first-degree sexual assault, aggravated first-degree sexual assault, sexual assault in a spousal or cohabiting relationship, second-degree sexual assault and third-degree sexual assault, with or without a firearm – may be prosecuted at any time, if the alleged perpetrator is identified through DNA evidence and the crime was reported within five years of the attack.

“Make no mistake: Sexual assault is violent crime – it is not a crime of passion,” Governor Rell said at a ceremonial bill signing at the Waterbury Police Department headquarters. “It is violence of the most personal and devastating kind, as brutal in its own right as murder. And it deserves not only harsh punishment but our very best – and unswerving – effort to bring the perpetrators to justice. Today Connecticut takes another step in that direction.

“Although DNA matching has been around for some time, there were times in the past when the samples were too small or too degraded to be used in prosecutions,” the Governor noted. “Newer technologies allow us to dig deeper and do more with those samples, and now our laws are in line with that technology.”

Governor Rell highlighted the work of Donna Palomba, a sexual assault victim who strongly advocated for the change in the law.

“Donna has not only fought back from a vicious assault, she has made this change in the law a part of her personal mission to improve the treatment of victims and the pursuit of justice,” the Governor said. “Her story – ‘Jane Doe No More’ – is told on her web site, www.janedoenomore.org. The site also has important resources and links for assault victims. Her advocacy for this change makes her a true Connecticut hero and I salute her.”

The change is contained within Senate Bill 1500, the “general government implementer” – omnibus legislation enacted to put many provisions of the new state budget into operation.

“I wish that signing a bill would eliminate the crime of sexual assault entirely – that we could be assured no person would ever suffer such brutalization again,” Governor Rell said. “Sadly, we cannot do that. But with this legislation, we can at least be sure of this much: Connecticut will pursue every lead to bring such violent criminals down.”