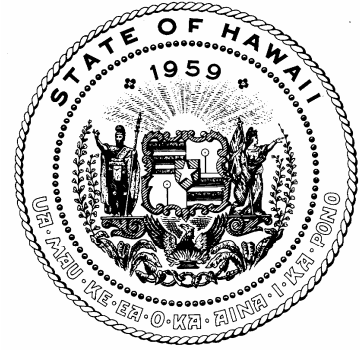


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**MEDIA RELEASE**

January 3, 2007

**2008 PUBLIC SAFETY BILL PACKAGE**

Senator Will Espero, Chair of the Public Safety Committee, has unveiled the highlights of his 2008 Public Safety Bill package.

Senator Espero's district was rocked by the brutal murder of Karen Ertell in her own home by a 15 year old neighbor on the morning of May 25, 2007. Because of her killer's age, the trial that would bring him to justice will be held under a veil of confidentiality in Family Court. Senator Espero believes that when a 15 year old is charged with first or second degree murder, the trial should be held in the public arena. He will introduce a bill that requires 15 year olds accused of murder in the first or second degree to be tried as a adults, and if found guilty, after confinement in juvenile detention during their youth, be transferred to an adult prison upon reaching age 18.

Another bill in the package will help bring justice to the assailants of rape victims. With modern technology, cold rape cases can now be solved. The bill would remove the statute of limitations on sex assault cases so that these criminals can be prosecuted.

A third proposal arises from the re-emergence of the Peter Kema case last year. If the bill passes, no longer could a parent avoid prosecution for the disappearance of a missing child by claiming that the child was given to a third person.

Other bills would:

- Adopt Katie's Law, which creates a DNA database of those arrested for serious crimes, to aid law enforcement authorities in catching perpetrators;
- Require those convicted of drunk driving to pay for ignition lock devices on their vehicles that prevent them from driving when they are intoxicated;
- Return female inmates imprisoned on the mainland to Hawaii;
- Clarify the mandatory nature of Act 8 (SB 932) which requires the governor to return Hawaii inmates imprisoned on the mainland to serve their last year in Hawaii where they can participate in programs that will prepare them for re-entry into society upon the end of their terms;
- Create a task force to identify the reasons Hawaiians/part-Hawaiians – who account for 20% of the state population -- comprise 40% of our prison population;
- Require the governor to give 45 days public notice before pardoning an individual;
- Make it a misdemeanor to use fists in disciplining children;
- Create a violent offender registry so the public can be informed about the residences of violent felons.

Senator Espero said, "These are some of the public safety bills I will introduce in the 2008 Session. I believe passage of these measures would make Hawaii a safer place for our families and communities."

END