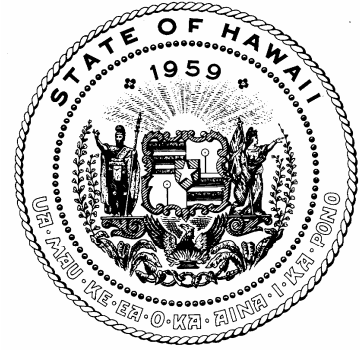


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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**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.

Modern technology can help bring justice for rape victims whose cases remain unprosecuted. Senator Espero's bill, if passed, would remove the statute of limitations on sex assault cases so that these criminals can be tried and punished.

Another bill, adopting Katie's Law, creates a DNA database of those arrested for serious crimes, to aid law enforcement authorities in catching perpetrators. Katie Sepich was a 22-year-old university student in another state who was brutally raped and murdered. Her killer was caught in the act of carrying a knife as he broke in to the apartment of two women who were home at the time.

A violent offender registry that informs the public of the residences of these ex-felons would be created under a third bill. The proposed registry is similar to the sex offender registry now currently mandated, which helps parents be aware of and take precautions for sex offenders who live in their community. Opponents say former prisoners have paid their debt to society and should not be stigmatized. Senator Espero believes that this is the price a person pays for having committed a violent crime.

Public input prior to pardons can help keep communities safer. A fourth proposal requires the governor to give 45 days notice of a pending pardon to give individuals the opportunity to comment. Senator Espero feels this would increase public safety by allowing pertinent information to be considered before a pardon is completed.

Other bills would:

- Require a 15 year old charged with first or second degree murder to be tried as an adult, and if found guilty, after confinement in juvenile detention during their youth, be transferred to an adult prison upon reaching age 18.
- 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 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; and
- Make it a misdemeanor to use fists in disciplining children.

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