



Senate of Pennsylvania

MEMO

TO: All Senators

DATE: February 9, 2010

FROM: Senator Lisa M. Boseola

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "LB", written over the printed name of Senator Lisa M. Boseola.

SUBJECT: Co-sponsorship of Legislation

I plan to reintroduce legislation that would require any individual arrested for a felony offense to provide a DNA sample to the state's database.

In New Mexico, this legislation is known as 'Katie's Law' in honor of Katie Sepich, a graduate student who was brutally raped and murdered in 2003. Despite the fact that the police were able to obtain DNA evidence in her case, Katie's parents had to wait three long years until her killer was brought to justice. They were horrified to learn that the killer had been previously arrested on felony charges three months after her death, but disappeared after being released on bond and eluded prosecution in Katie's case until December 2006. If he had been DNA tested after his initial first arrest, he likely would not have ever been let out on bail.

The goal of this bill is simple: to catch offenders when they come into contact with the justice system, and prevent them from harming anyone else. DNA testing also recently helped solve a cold-case murder in the Harrisburg area, and according to state police officials, DNA database matching helped in over 400 investigations during the first nine months of 2007. It is important to note that DNA sampling is a minimally invasive process, and can be used to rule out suspects as well as solve cases. In addition, Pennsylvania has been fingerprinting all felony arrestees since the late 1970s, however, fingerprint matching can be much less reliable than DNA testing, which identifies 13 points on a DNA strand and creates a 52-digit code that is specific to each individual who is not an identical twin.

All 50 states require DNA testing for convicted felons. Additionally, 21 states have already enacted laws that require DNA testing upon felony arrest, similar to what this legislation will do.

If you are interested in joining me as a co-sponsor of this important legislation, please contact Julie Carraghan in my office at 787-4236 or by e-mail at jcarraghan@pasenate.com.