



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Crime Victims' Families Call for Passage of DNA Collection Legislation**

**SACRAMENTO** – At a press conference today, Assemblymember Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove), along with crime victims' families and bill supporters, called for the passage of Assembly Bill 16. The bill would allow the collection of DNA upon conviction of only crimes that were previously felonies but are now misdemeanors, including: shoplifting, forgery, insufficient funds, petty theft, receiving stolen property, petty theft with a prior, and drug possession offenses.

"DNA evidence is an essential tool for law enforcement to convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent," said Assemblymember Cooper. "It is indisputable that lesser public offenses of fraud, property crime and drug possession are linked to the more serious violent crimes of rape and murder."

"Bottom-line, AB 16 will help protect women, solve cold cases and protect the innocent," Cooper added.

The Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act, approved in November 2014, reclassified a number of felony crimes including drug offenses, fraud, theft, and forgery as misdemeanors. The reclassification of felony offenses to misdemeanors has resulted in a significant reduction of DNA samples collected from offenders and has negatively impacted the ability of law enforcement to solve rapes, murders and other serious and violent crimes through reliable DNA evidence.

Since 2014, there has been a projected loss or deficit of approximately 2000 known hits to unknown hits. It is projected that 450 of those are connected to rape or homicide

Women are far more likely to be victims of rape and serial rape. According to a 2010 report issued by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in five women report being raped in their lifetime.

On average 78 percent of unsolved rape and murder cases in multiple studies by the California DOJ have been connected to a lower level offense.

“The DNA profile that goes into the national forensic DNA database (CODIS) contains only 20 markers out of over three billion in a DNA strand, each of the 20 markers were selected because they are non- genetic markers,” said Jayann Sepich. “My own DNA profile is printed on the back of my business card. People that say our privacy is invaded by this system are simply misinformed. CODIS only helps identify and hold those among us accountable for the heinous serious crimes they commit,” added Sepich.

DNA helped solve a 43-year old killing of two Yuba County girls. 12-year-old Valerie Lane and 13-year-old Doris Derryberry were last seen on November 11, 1973. The killing went unsolved for four decades until William Lloyd Harbour and Larry Don Patterson were arrested in 2016 on an unrelated charge. Harbour for drug offenses in 1997 and 2003, and Patterson for a 1976 arrest on charges of raping two adult women in Chico, California. In March of 2014, Yuba County investigators reviewed the case for evidence that could be retested with newer technology. California Department of Justice Forensic Labs testing revealed that DNA evidence was matched and identified Harbour and Patterson. Both men were found guilty and sentenced to five years to life in prison. Shirley Derryberry, Doris’ sister testified today in support of AB 16.

This is just one example of the many cases which have been solved through the DNA database by connecting low level offenders to unsolved crimes of the past. Under current law, the murder of Doris Derryberry and Valerie Lane would not have been solved.

Solving rapes, murders, and other serious or violent crimes through reliable DNA evidence will help keep neighborhoods safe from dangerous recidivist offenders who would otherwise remain undetected.

AB 16 will be heard by the Legislature in the coming months.

### **Links to audio and video from today’s news conference:**

Includes statements from today’s committee hearing and presser by Assemblymember Jim Cooper; Shirley Derryberry, Sister of Doris Derryberry; Stan Vantassel, Nephew of Doris Derryberry; Jayann Sepich, Mother of Katie Sepich.

*Complete Video of AB 16 Committee Hearing and News Conference*

<https://vimeo.com/208367789>

Password: AB16COOPER

*Complete Video of AB 16 Committee Hearing and News Conference*

<https://youtu.be/yXTnBOySeDQ>

*Opening remarks from Assemblymember Jim Cooper at the AB16/DNA Collection news conference. (4:16)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNACooperRemarks.mp3>

*Assemblymember Cooper says thousands of DNA samples are not collected today because of Prop 47 reclassification of certain crimes. (:18)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNACooper1.mp3>

*Assemblymember Cooper says, under AB 16, DNA samples will be collected from people convicted of certain misdemeanors. (:15)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNACooper2.mp3>

*Assemblymember Cooper says there is a cost associated with AB 16 but says justice is worth the price. (:22)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNACooper3.mp3>

*Remarks from Jayann Sepich, mother of crime victim Katie Sepich. (3:34)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNAJayannRemarks.mp3>

*Remarks from Stan Vantassel, Nephew of crime victim Doris Derryberry. (3:00)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNAStanVantasselRemarks.mp3>

*Entire, unedited AB 16/DNA Collection news conference. (18:02)*

<https://caucus.asmdc.org/sites/default/files/audio/20170314AB16DNACooperNewsConference.mp3>

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*Assemblymember Cooper represents the Cities of Sacramento, Elk Grove, Galt and Lodi.*