

**STATE SENATOR
KEVIN BACON**
3rd Ohio Senate District



**STATE SENATOR
JIM HUGHES**
16th Ohio Senate District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BACON AND HUGHES INTRODUCE BILL TO IMPROVE VICTIMS' RIGHTS

"Roberta's Law" would require victims to be notified when their attacker is up for parole

COLUMBUS— State Senators Kevin Bacon (R- Village of Minerva Park) and Jim Hughes (R- Columbus) announced today that they have introduced Senate Bill 160, legislation that would establish additional rights for victims of violent crimes and their families. Bacon and former State Senator Steve Stivers first introduced the bill during the 127th General Assembly after learning of the Franklin County case of Roberta Francis.

Francis was 15 years old when she was brutally raped and murdered in 1974. Though her killer, a convicted child molester, was sentenced to life in prison, he served only 30 years of his sentence before being paroled. Francis' father was not notified when his daughter's killer went before the parole board and was unable to appear on her behalf.

"Passage of this bill will end the practice of allowing criminals to be paroled without hearing from their victims," Bacon said. "Notification of them and their families gives them time to come forward to the parole board and present their case as to why an offender should remain in jail instead of released on parole."

Under Senate Bill 160, victims and their families or representatives would be automatically notified when parole hearings are scheduled for the offenders that committed crimes against them, whether or not they have specifically made this request. The notification must take place 60 days in advance of the parole hearing or parole board recommendation of release or commutation of sentence. The bill also requires the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the offender was indicted to notify the victim in writing of this hearing.

"As a former prosecutor, I have seen firsthand what these types of crimes can do to victims and their families, and I believe this bill is long overdue," Hughes said. "It is imperative that we continue to protect our citizens and ensure that those who have suffered the most as a result of these crimes have a voice during a parole hearing."

In addition, the bill also provides that voluntary manslaughter committed with a sexual motivation will be considered a sexually-oriented offense. This change will close a gap in

Ohio's sex offender and registration laws in order to ensure that law enforcement will be able to monitor when any sexually motivated killer is released into the community.

Senate Bill 160 will now be referred to a Senate committee for further consideration.

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For more information, please contact Laurel Ullman in Senator Bacon's office at (614) 466-8064 or Andy Bowsher in Senator Hughes' office at (614) 466-5981.