



Legislation Text

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Res. 1660

Resolution calling upon the appropriate Committee of the Council of the City of New York to conduct a hearing on the expanding role of DNA evidence in law enforcement and its effect on the administration of the death penalty.

By Council Members Warden and Lopez; also Council Members Clarke, Eisland, Foster, Leffler, Robinson and Rodriguez

Whereas, Deoxyribonucleic acid ("DNA") is a molecule that is present in every cell of the body that contains a nucleus and is the chemical dispatcher of genetic information; and

Whereas, Each individual has a unique DNA pattern, and moreover, a person's DNA is specific to that person regardless of the biological sample from which it is taken, such as blood, hair and flesh; and

Whereas, By breaking open the nucleus of cells collected at a crime scene, lab technicians are able to extract DNA and amplify it; and

Whereas, DNA technology has revolutionized the use of forensics in law enforcement, since advancements in DNA research now allow lab technicians to identify precise genetic markers from bits of biological evidence typically left at a crime scene, including saliva, hair follicles, semen, blood and sweat; and

Whereas, Many law enforcement officials believe that DNA has become one of the most important crime solving tools since the development of fingerprinting nearly a century ago; and

Whereas, DNA evidence is playing an ever expanding role in law enforcement, as evidenced by the state-wide DNA Identification Index, established pursuant to the New York State Executive Law, which is a compilation of DNA samples from individuals convicted and sentenced for certain crimes and is available for comparison with DNA evidence recovered at crime scenes; and

Whereas, Increased utilization of DNA research may have a profound effect on the implementation of the death penalty; and

Whereas, One of the goals of the Innocence Protection Act, a bipartisan bill recently introduced in Congress, is to promote the use of DNA evidence; and

Whereas, Many officials have endorsed the retroactive testing of DNA evidence, where applicable, in death row convictions; and

Whereas, Through the increased testing of DNA evidence, states can increase the certainty of capital crimes convictions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate Committee of the Council of the City of New York conduct a hearing on the expanding role of DNA evidence in law enforcement and its effect on the administration of the death penalty.

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