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Bill requiring those charged with a felony to submit DNA



HELENA (AP) -- A bill requiring individuals charged with a felony to submit DNA samples is meeting resistance from civil liberties advocates and law enforcement agencies.

Rep. Ralph Heinert, R-Libby, told the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday that he was sponsoring the bill to help police do their job.

But Jim Kembel of the Montana Association of Chiefs of Police said his organization couldn't support the bill until questions about expenses were resolved. The state's budget office has not yet determined the cost of the bill.

he attorney general's office had similar concerns. Bill Unger of the Forensic Sciences Division said the workload for the state crime lab in Missoula would nearly double, to about 350 DNA cases a month. He said the lab would need two additional forensic scientists, each with salaries of \$75,000 a year, to handle the extra work.

Scott Crichton of the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana said he's worried about potential violations of civil liberties.

"Innocent people do not belong in a criminal database," Crichton said. The bill, he said, created the potential for "population surveillance" by the state.

But Heinert said in an interview after the meeting that the bill had sufficient safeguards. A DNA sample would be taken from a suspect only if a court decided there was probable cause. [More here](#)

Posted by Stewart Rhodes at 5:18 PM



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