



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

July 2, 2024

Governor's Veto Message Regarding Senate Bill 507

By the authority vested in me, pursuant to part II, Article 44 of the New Hampshire Constitution, on July 02, 2024, I have vetoed Senate Bill 507, relative to extending the time to petition for a new trial in certain cases.

This well-intentioned bill seeks to provide an opportunity for individuals to petition for a new trial in instances where new evidence of exoneration becomes available. Such sentiment is sensible in the context of considering scientific and/or forensic breakthroughs, but the text of this legislation is problematic in that it is overly broad in allowing, if not inviting, an unending procession of frivolous petitions and appeals.

Specifically, the proposed legislation provides infinite opportunity for petitions premised on nothing more than the mere assertion of new evidence, unconnected to any scientific or forensic basis. Additionally, and importantly, unlike existing law (RSA 651-D) which provides for a review of DNA evidence, there is no consideration given to victim consultation in the context of reopening these matters which could potentially (albeit unintentionally) re-victimize individuals.

In sum, while I understand and agree with the notion of not time-barring scientific evidence of exoneration, the open-ended language of this bill could have the unintended consequence of encouraging baseless assertions unnecessarily bogging down proceedings. The legislature should revisit the intent of this bill with a model based on broadening the application(s) of RSA 651-D to avoid such outcomes.

For the reasons stated above, I have vetoed Senate Bill 507.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher T. Sununu".

Christopher T. Sununu
Governor