



**FROM THE OFFICE OF
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR
SHERRI BEVAN WALSH**

THE SENIOR NEWS

Prosecutor Walsh Testifies for Tougher D.U.I. Legislation

On June 7, 2007, with 1,290 votes from Summit County citizens in my hand, I testified before the Ohio House Criminal Justice Committee in favor of Senate Bill 17, legislation to strengthen Ohio's D.U.I. laws.

I stated during my testimony that a person is killed in an alcohol related traffic crash every 43 minutes in the United States. In 2005, 16,885 individuals were killed in alcohol related crashes in this country. Ohio ranks sixth in the country for the highest number of fatalities. In the past three years, my office has prosecuted 20 individuals who were driving drunk and killed an innocent citizen as a result of a traffic crash. We have also prosecuted more than 100 defendants in the past three years, who had five or more D.U.I. convictions and were driving drunk yet again. Around half of these individuals were driving with suspended licenses and 85% of these defendants refused to take a breath or blood alcohol test.

Under the current law in Ohio, a suspected drunk driver is given the choice of taking a breath

test. The penalty for refusing to take the test is a one year license suspension. These offenders reason that they are better served to refuse the test than providing the evidence in court to their guilt.

Senate Bill 17 provides that offenders with two or more prior DUI convictions shall take a breath test and should they refuse, they will be subject to a mandatory blood draw.

I asked residents to complete an online survey regarding mandatory testing of repeat drunk drivers. Over 1,000 people responded and thus far 90% favored mandatory testing.

Please cast your vote regarding the changes to this law by going to our website at:

<http://www.co.summit.oh.us/prosecutor>

DID YOU KNOW?

Internet gambling is illegal in the State of Ohio. A person should enjoy Internet games freely, but should not place bets or bids on casino style games.

Travel Clubs Not Always a Good Deal

Across the country many vacationers are being promised discounts on hotel stays, airfares and cruises, and inside access to travel deals all in exchange for attending a 90-minute sales presentation for local travel clubs. In addition, the travel clubs offer to arrange that the membership fee be placed on a credit card with a "no-interest, no-payment for one year" since the fee can be quite high.



However, these travel clubs are not keeping up their end of the deal. The credit card companies are sending out bills with interest and many consumers claim they can obtain the same travel arrangements or even better on their own. One consumer stated she found the exact same offer when she did an online search herself.

Travis Ford, who works in the Missouri Attorney General's Office, says to think long and hard before joining one of these travel clubs. Also, be wary if these travel clubs charge more than a few dollars for a membership and their promises seem big.

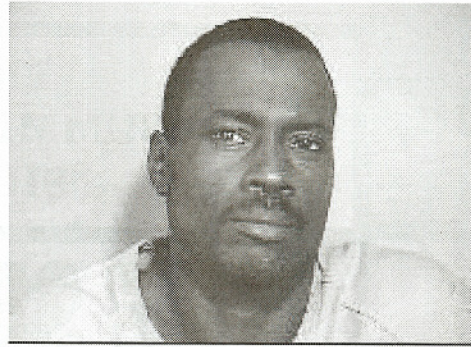
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John Westry was sentenced to 28 years in prison for his attack on two women, a 70-year-old woman and a woman eight months pregnant.

CASES INVOLVING SENIOR CITIZENS

Harry Collier, 45, was sentenced to five years in prison for burglarizing two homes.

On November 1, 2006, at approximately 1:15 p.m., Collier entered an elderly couple's home while the male victim (85 years old) was outside working in the yard. The female victim (79 years old) was alone in the home when Collier entered. The female victim did not see Collier enter the home, only walking down the driveway from the home. He stole a credit card and \$16 from the couple. Collier went to a gas station and spent \$42.90 on beer with the credit card.

On November 9, 2006, at approximately 4:20 p.m., Collier entered another home through and unlocked side door. The female victim (67 years old) was outside working in the yard and her husband (69 years old) was in the basement. As the female victim was working in the yard, she saw Collier walk out of the house and down the drive-

way. She confronted him and began yelling, "He robbed me." The neighbors heard the altercation and chased the victim until police arrived. Collier stole \$66.00 from the victim's purse.

When Collier was arrested for the November 9 incident, he confessed to the November 1 incident.

Helpful tip: Just as many crimes happen during the day as at night. Always keep your doors locked, even when working in the yard, inside your home or outside.

John Westry, 44, was sentenced to 28 years in prison after pleading guilty to Attempted Murder, Kidnapping and Robbery for the attack on an 70-year-old woman and the kidnapping and robbery of a pregnant woman and her 2-year-old child.

In the late afternoon of November 5, 2006, a 70-year-old woman was attacked as she was taking out the trash. Westry grabbed her and started to hit her in the face. He forced her inside her house and continued to beat her and threatened to kill her. Westry took money from her and a voucher from an out-of-state casino. He tied a purse strap around her neck to strangle her and dragged her up the steps by her feet. When police

arrived, they had to cut the purse to get it off her neck. The victim spent five days in the hospital as a result of this assault.

Westry also pled guilty to Kidnapping and Robbery for a crime he committed on August 6, 2005. The victim in this case was eight months pregnant. Her 2-year-old daughter was playing in the backyard and she went into the home to retrieve the phone. When she went to go outside, Westry was standing at the door. She tried to get to her daughter and he forced her back into the house. When she told him she didn't have any money, he made her take him to the bank to withdraw cash. The three of them went to the ATM where the victim gave Westry \$60. He took the money and fled on foot. Westry might have got away with this crime but he made the mistake of leaving a drink bottle at the victim's house. After his attack on the elderly woman, his DNA was matched to this crime.

Helpful tip: Always be alert to what is going on around you, even at home. We think we are safe in our homes but there are always criminals on the prowl for the next victim.