



JOSALEE THRIFT REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Gov. M. Jodi Rell signs into law a bill removing the statute of limitations for sexual assault Tuesday morning at the Waterbury Police Department. Behind her, from left, are Waterbury Police Superintendent Neil O'Leary, Rep. Selim Noujaim, R-74th District, Rep. DebraLee Hovey, R-Monroe, bill advocate Donna Palomba, Rep. Themis Klarides, R-Derby, and Rep. Jeffrey Berger, D-73rd District.

Governor visits Waterbury to sign sex crimes bill

BY BEN CONERY
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — Gov. M. Jodi Rell came to Waterbury on Tuesday to sign into law a bill that aims to fight sexual assault.

The law eliminates the statute of limitations on six of the most serious sexual assault crimes, if the perpetrator has been identified by DNA evidence and the victim notified authorities of the assault within five years.

While the law was passed

during the spring's special legislative session as part of budget document known as an implementor, Rell said Tuesday the law is important enough to warrant a special ceremony heralding its passage.

The ceremony was held at Waterbury police headquarters because of its connection to one of the law's chief proponents, Donna Palomba.

"She has made changing the law in Connecticut her personal mission," Rell said. "Her advocacy for this change has made

her a true Connecticut hero."

Palomba, a successful business woman, was raped in her home in 1993. At first, police didn't believe her story. She later won a lawsuit against the city, but the case remained unsolved for more than a decade.

In 2004, a hunch from Police Superintendent Neil O'Leary backed up by DNA evidence showed that Palomba's attacker was family friend John Regan. Because the statute of limitations had expired, Regan could only be charged with kidnapp-

ing.

Regan is serving a 15-year prison sentence for attacks against three women, including Palomba.

Palomba started a Web site this year, www.jane-doenomore.org, which aims to help rape victims. She said Tuesday that eliminating the statute of limitations in those crimes helps state law keep up with DNA science.

"It's a first step," she said. "It's going to help a lot of people going forward."