

## The ADVOCATE

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/local/scn-sa-nor.tong3sep22,0,4646312.story?track=rss>

# Tong named to reform panel

By Brian Lockhart  
Staff Writer

September 22, 2007

Freshman state Rep. William Tong has been tapped to lead the effort at reforming how Connecticut's criminal justice agencies share information.

The announcement was made yesterday by state Sen. Andrew McDonald, D-Stamford, and state Rep. Michael Lawlor, D-East Haven, co-chairmen of the legislature's Judiciary Committee.

"It's got to be a comprehensive, major overhaul," said Tong, D-Stamford.

During a Sept. 11 hearing on the murder of three members of a Cheshire family, legal officials like Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane urged legislators to upgrade what they believe is the criminal justice system's archaic computer system.

"I wouldn't even say we have a woeful information technology system," Kane told Tong and other Judiciary Committee members. "It's practically nonexistent."

A pair of career criminals out on parole are charged with felony murder in the triple killing.

Some, Tong included, believe that the July 23 murders would not have happened if the Board of Pardons and Paroles had received a sentencing transcript in which a judge described one of the accused killers as a "cold-blooded predator."

"The fundamental thing here was the breakdown in the exchange of information," Tong said. "It's simply inexcusable to parole somebody without the information."

Tong said he volunteered the experience he gleaned as an attorney in New York City for the firm of Simpson, Thacher and Bartlett.

"I went there after law school and worked on a couple of very, very high-profile massive litigation representing JP Morgan Chase," Tong said. "As part of that I led the effort to manage thousands and thousands of pages of documents and coordinated discover and information gathering between several law firms and hundreds of lawyers."



Tong said he has begun researching the practices of other states, including Arizona, Colorado, Kansas and Pennsylvania. He also is looking to the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Corrections for expertise.

"The key idea is not to reinvent the wheel, but leverage what other states have done, improve on it and get that implemented in our state," Tong said. "It's not a cheap undertaking."

He hopes to present proposed legislation by this fall or the start of the regular legislative session next year.

"We really need the governor and the executives and agencies in our criminal justice system to really join and be partners in this process," Tong said. "They're the ones who have to implement it. I can't do that. That's not my role. I need them."

The bond package approved by the legislature, which Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell said yesterday she would veto, included \$1 million toward the effort but Tong expected millions more will be needed in the coming years.

*Copyright © 2007, Southern Connecticut Newspapers, Inc.*