

**Bristol County District Attorney's Office**  
**C. Samuel Sutter**  
**District Attorney**

**Press Release**  
**June 4, 2008**

District Attorney Sam Sutter announced that Tyson Rapoza, 18, of 43 Locust St., 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, New Bedford, was convicted today in New Bedford Superior Court of illegal gun possession and cocaine trafficking charges.

Mr. Rapoza was sentenced to serve 3 to 5 years in a state prison, to be followed by three years of probation.

Mr. Rapoza was arrested by members of New Bedford Police's Organized Crime Unit on February 29, 2008. During the execution of a search warrant at Rapoza's home, police located a partially loaded .25 caliber handgun, nearly 50 grams of cocaine packaged for street sale and \$2,430 in cash.

Mr. Rapoza was found to be dangerous after a March 11<sup>th</sup> dangerousness hearing in New Bedford District Court, and has been behind bars ever since his arrest. The dangerousness hearing was held as part of District Attorney Sutter's successful policy to request a dangerousness hearing anytime a defendant is charged with an illegal gun crime connected to a felony. Since instituting the policy in January of 2007, Sutter's office has held 134 illegal firearm-related dangerousness hearings in the four district courts around the county. Sutter's prosecutors have been successful in 104 of those hearings.

The case went from dangerousness hearing to indictment to conviction in just 83 days.

The consecutive sentence Mr. Rapoza received (3 to 5 years for the gun charge and 3 years probation for trafficking more than 14 grams of cocaine) is also an example of Sutter's new policies regarding the toxic combination of illegal firearm possession and drug dealing.

Upon taking office early last year, Sutter instituted a policy to requests consecutive sentences anytime anyone is charged with an illegal firearm crime and a drug distribution crime.

"This case highlights the full scope of my crackdown on illegal firearms. The use of the dangerousness statute gets most of the publicity, which is understandable because we have held more than 100 individuals without bail due to this policy," Sutter said. "But just as important to public safety are the other components of the policy, exemplified by this case. We try to resolve all of these cases within 90 days and most of the time we do it, just as we did in this case. And we also call for consecutive sentences when the case involves drug dealing and illegal firearm possession. That also took place here."

“I am very proud of the work of the New Bedford Police Department and prosecutors Matthew Sylvia and Garrett Fregault for their outstanding work on this case.”

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