

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2831**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Kay Khan*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act regarding the classifications system for prisoners in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>
<i>Denise Provost</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>
<i>Carl M. Sciortino, Jr.</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>
<i>Ellen Story</i>	<i>3rd Hampshire</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2831**

By Ms. Khan of Newton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2831) of Kay Khan and others that the Department of Corrections issue regulations relative to the classification of prisoners. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1485 OF 2009-2010.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Eleven**  
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An Act regarding the classifications system for prisoners in the Commonwealth.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           Whereas, the cost of imprisoning offenders in the prisons, jails, and houses of correction  
2 of the commonwealth has reached approximately one billion dollars per year; and

3           Whereas, no more than \*\* percent of that cost is at present devoted to education,  
4 vocational, and therapeutic programming for offenders; and

5           Whereas, the cost of imprisoning an offender in a high security correctional facility has  
6 reached well over fifty thousand dollars per year; and

7           Whereas, the cost of imprisoning an offender in a low security or pre-release facility is  
8 approximately sixty percent of the cost of high security confinement; and

9           Whereas, it has been known since at least 1987 that a disproportionate number of  
10 incarcerated offenders in this commonwealth are confined in high security facilities; and

11           Whereas, between 1994 and 2004, the percentage of offenders in minimum security  
12 facilities declined from twenty three percent to eleven percent and the percentage of offenders in  
13 maximum security facilities increased from nine percent to nineteen percent; and

14           Whereas, twelve percent of Massachusetts offenders are currently being released to our  
15 communities from maximum security facilities, which is more than twice the percentage of such  
16 releases in other states; and

17           Whereas, it is more practicable and less expensive to conduct education, vocational, and  
18 therapeutic programming for offenders in lower security correctional facilities; and

19           Whereas, the administrative method for determining the security and rehabilitative  
20 programming requirements of each prisoner in the custody of Commonwealth is known as  
21 “classification;”

22           It is hereby resolved, That in order to contain correctional costs and promote the  
23 rehabilitation of offenders in a manner that balances the need to prepare offenders to live within  
24 the law with the security requirements of public safety; the General Court hereby establishes the  
25 following requirements for all classification regulations and procedures promulgated by the  
26 commissioner of correction.

27           Section 2.

28           Chapter 127 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000 Official Edition, is hereby  
29 amended by inserting after section \*\*\* the following section:—

30           Section \*\*\* . The commission of correction shall promulgate regulations and procedures  
31 for the classification of all persons committed to his custody and to the custody of the several  
32 sheriffs.

33           Section \*\*\* A. The classification regulations and procedures employed by the  
34 commissioner of correction shall create an objective, validated, point-based classification  
35 system.

36           Section \*\*\* B. The classification regulations and procedures employed by the  
37 commissioner shall require that no more than fifteen percent of offenders be classified to  
38 maximum security correctional facilities at any time, and that no less than thirty percent of  
39 offenders be classified to minimum security, including pre-release or work-release correctional  
40 facilities, at all times.

41           Section \*\*\* C. The classification regulations and procedures employed by the  
42 commissioner shall ensure that no less than eighty percent of offenders progress to minimum  
43 security or pre-release correctional facilities by the time they have completed eighty percent of  
44 the minimum term of their sentence or aggregated sentences.

45           Section 3. The requirements of this section shall apply and control the movement of all  
46 incarcerated sentenced offenders through the correctional facilities of the commonwealth  
47 notwithstanding the provisions of any other previously enacted legislation.