

SENATE No. 2544

Senate, June 7, 2018 -- Message from His Excellency the Governor recommending legislation relative to child predators

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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June 6, 2018

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

Wayne Chapman has been behind bars since the late 1970s. Part of that time was spent serving a series of criminal sentences for raping children. When he finished serving his criminal sentences, the Commonwealth was able to continue to hold him in custody through a civil commitment process for sexually dangerous persons. He is on the verge of being released from that civil commitment despite the fact that experts disagree as to whether he remains so dangerous that he should remain in custody.

Ordinarily, we would resolve this dispute through a trial. However, in 2009, the Supreme Judicial Court ruled that our civil commitment statute does not permit a trial if two of these experts, referred to as “qualified examiners,” whom the superior court orders to examine the person agree that he no longer remains sexually dangerous.

Chapman’s case illustrates two serious issues with our justice system. It is clear that we must reform the court process for reviewing the commitment of sexually dangerous persons so that there is a full hearing before a sexually dangerous person is released. But we must also re-examine the sentences Chapman received in the 1970s for raping children. Serial rapists of children should be sentenced to life in prison and not to shorter terms that give them the chance to be released and reoffend.

I am submitting for your consideration “An Act Relative to Child Predators.” This legislation addresses both of these issues. First, this legislation reforms our civil commitment

process so that any disagreement among experts will result in a trial at which a judge or jury can hear all of the evidence about whether a person remains sexually dangerous and make a fully informed decision regarding release. Second, the legislation establishes a mandatory minimum sentence of life without parole for someone who uses force to rape two or more children, or uses force to rape a child after being convicted of a previous sex offense.

While these reforms will not impact Chapman's case, they will help keep child predators in custody in the future. I urge your prompt and favorable review of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker,
Governor

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In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court
(2017-2018)

An Act relative to child predators.

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 1 of chapter 123A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by striking out the definitions of “Community Access
3 Board” and “Community Access Program”.

4 SECTION 2. Said section 1 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby further
5 amended by inserting after the definition of “Qualified examiner,” the following definition:-

6 “Sexual dangerousness review board,” a board consisting of five members appointed by
7 the commissioner of correction, consistent with the policies and procedures of the department of
8 correction. Each member shall be a psychologist or psychiatrist who meets the requirements for
9 being a qualified examiner. Membership shall include at least two persons who are not
10 department of correction employees, but who may be independent contractors or consultants.
11 The board’s functions shall be to evaluate sexual dangerousness, to provide expert evidence and
12 testimony in connection with proceedings under this chapter, and to make recommendations for
13 the treatment of sexually dangerous persons committed to the treatment center.

14 SECTION 3. Section 2 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
15 adding the following paragraph:-

16 Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, persons adjudicated as
17 sexually dangerous persons and committed to the treatment center shall have no expectation of
18 privacy, privilege or confidentiality in any records or communications regarding treatment,
19 including without limitation, medical, psychiatric and psychological records of any type.

20 SECTION 4. Section 2A of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
21 striking out, in lines 27 to 28, the words “considered for participation in the community access
22 program” and inserting in place thereof the following words:- until released pursuant to section
23 9.

24 SECTION 5. Section 6A of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
25 striking out the second and third paragraphs and inserting in place thereof the following 4
26 paragraphs:-

27 The department of correction shall establish a board known as the sexual dangerousness
28 review board, as defined in section 1, referred to in this section as the board. The board shall, 9
29 months before the release of a sex offender from his criminal sentence, evaluate each such
30 prisoner under sentence in the custody of the department of correction to make a
31 recommendation to the district attorney or the attorney general about the present sexual
32 dangerousness of such prisoner. In the case of a prisoner who is sentenced to prison for no more
33 than 9 months, such review shall be conducted as soon as practicable following such person’s
34 admission to prison. The board shall set forth its recommendations about the present sexual
35 dangerousness of said prisoner in a written report which report shall be admissible in evidence in

36 any proceeding under this chapter. In the event of dissenting opinions, two written reports shall
37 be prepared, one representing the majority opinion and one representing the minority opinion.

38 The board shall conduct examinations, including personal interviews, of each sexually
39 dangerous person committed to the treatment center for the purpose of opining whether the
40 person remains sexually dangerous. The board shall prepare written reports of its examinations
41 and diagnoses and the recommendations for the disposition of any petition filed pursuant to this
42 chapter, which reports shall be filed with the court.

43 Such examinations shall be conducted at least annually and on such additional basis as
44 determined by the department of correction or order of the court in connection with any petition
45 under section 9 of this chapter. The board shall also annually make recommendations for
46 treatment for each sexually dangerous person committed to the treatment center, which
47 recommendations shall be included in the board's written report.

48 For all evaluations conducted under this chapter, the board shall have access to all
49 records of the person being evaluated.

50 SECTION 6. The second paragraph of section 9 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is
51 hereby amended by striking out the third sentence and inserting in place thereof the following 2
52 sentences:-

53 The court shall also order the petitioner to be examined by the sexual dangerousness
54 review board, including personal interviews, as set forth in section 6A of this chapter. Said
55 reports of the qualified examiners and the sexual dangerousness review board shall be admissible
56 in a hearing pursuant to this section.

57 SECTION 7. Said section 9 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby further
58 amended by inserting after the word “section,” in line 31, the following words:- or by the sexual
59 dangerousness review board.

60 SECTION 8. Said section 9 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby further
61 amended by inserting after the word “examiners,” in line 34, the following words:- and the
62 sexual dangerousness review board.

63 SECTION 9. The second paragraph of said section 9 of said chapter 123A, as so
64 appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the sixth and seventh sentences.

65 SECTION 10. Said section 9 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby further
66 amended by inserting after the word “center,” in line 46, the following words:- ; provided,
67 however, that such order shall not require discharge sooner than 48 hours from when it is issued.

68 SECTION 11. Said section 9 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby further
69 amended by striking out, in line 46, the words “such discharge” and inserting in place thereof the
70 following words:- receipt of such discharge order.

71 SECTION 12. Section 13 of said chapter 123A, is hereby amended by inserting after the
72 word “examiners,” in lines 5 to 6, 10 and 25, in each instance, the following words:- and the
73 sexual dangerousness review board.

74 SECTION 13. Section 14 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
75 inserting after the word “examiners,” in line 7, the following words:- and the sexual
76 dangerousness review board.

77 SECTION 14. Said section 14 of said chapter 123A, as so appearing, is hereby further
78 amended by striking out subsection (c).

79 SECTION 15. Said chapter 123A is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

80 Section 17. Evidence of the person's juvenile and adult court and probation records,
81 medical, psychiatric and psychological records and reports regarding the person named in the
82 petition prepared under this chapter, including the report of any qualified examiner and the
83 sexual dangerousness review board or any member thereof, the report of an expert retained by a
84 party, police reports relating to such person's prior sexual offenses and other offenses, incident
85 reports arising out of such person's incarceration or custody, oral or written statements prepared
86 for and to be offered at the trial by the victims of sexual misconduct by the person who is the
87 subject of the petition, parole records and reports, and any other evidence that tends to indicate
88 that he is or is not a sexually dangerous person shall be admissible in a trial under this chapter if
89 such written information has been provided to opposing counsel reasonably in advance of trial. A
90 qualified examiner, any member of the sexual dangerousness review board, an expert retained by
91 a party, any victim of sexual misconduct by the person who is the subject of the petition, and the
92 chief administrative officer of the treatment center or his designee may testify at the trial of a
93 petition brought under this chapter.

94 If a person who is the subject of a petition under this chapter seeks to present expert
95 opinion at a probable cause hearing or trial and said expert has conducted a personal interview of
96 the person, the court shall order the person to submit to a personal interview with the sexual
97 dangerousness review board and such other expert as designated by the commonwealth. If the
98 person refuses to participate in the personal interview with the sexual dangerousness review

99 board or such other expert as is designated by the commonwealth, the court shall exclude the
100 person's expert from testifying at such hearing or trial.

101 Evidence of the opinion of a single qualified examiner, any member of the sexual
102 dangerousness review board or any person meeting the requirements of a qualified examiner that
103 the subject of a petition brought under sections 9 or 14 is a sexually dangerous person, shall be
104 deemed sufficient for the commonwealth to meet its burden of proof.

105 SECTION 16. Section 133A of chapter 127 of the General Laws, as appearing in the
106 2016 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "degree," in line 5, the
107 following words:- or rape of a child through use of force or threat of bodily injury.

108 SECTION 17. Said section 133A of said chapter 127, as so appearing, is hereby further
109 amended by inserting after the word "murder," in line 6, the words:- or rape.

110 SECTION 18. Section 22C of chapter 265 of the General Laws, as so appearing, is
111 hereby amended by striking out, in line 17, the words "or any term of years, but not less than 20
112 years" and inserting in place thereof the following words:- and shall not be eligible for parole
113 pursuant to section 133A of chapter 127.

114 SECTION 19. Said section 22C of said chapter 265, as so appearing, is hereby further
115 amended by striking out the second sentence.

116 SECTION 20. Said chapter 265 is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

117 Section 59. Whoever, having been convicted upon a single indictment of two or more
118 rapes of a child through use of force or threat of bodily injury in violation of section 22A in
119 which the victims were different children, shall be adjudged a child predator, and shall be

120 punished by imprisonment in the state prison for life and shall not be eligible for parole pursuant
121 to section 133A of chapter 127, and such indictment shall neither be continued without a finding
122 nor placed on file.

123 SECTION 21. Sections 3, 9 through 11, inclusive, 14 and 15 shall apply to all petitions
124 brought pursuant to chapter 123A of the General Laws pending on the effective date of this act
125 and to all such petitions filed after the effective date of this act.

126 SECTION 22. Sections 5 through 8, inclusive, 12 and 13 shall apply to all petitions
127 brought under chapter 123A of the General Laws pending 90 days after the effective date of this
128 act and to all such petitions filed 90 days after the effective date of this act.

129 SECTION 23. Sections 5 through 8, inclusive, 12 and 13 shall take effect 90 days after
130 the effective date of this act.