

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY**

BILL NO. H1823

TITLE: An Act increasing penalties for hit and runs with recreational vehicles in the commonwealth to be known as the James Ward Act

SPONSOR: Rep. Kathleen R. LaNatra and Rep. Michelle L. Badger

COSPONSORS: Rep. Patrick J. Kearney
Rep. John J. Marsi
Sen. Michael O. Moore
Rep. Steven G. Xiarhos

HEARING DATE: May 6, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1609 (2023-2024) H731 (2017-2018)
H1720 (2021-2022) H4362 (2015-2016)
H1488 (2019-2020)

SENATE BILL: None

CURRENT LAW: Section 26B of Chapter 90B of the General Law prohibits the negligent or reckless operation of snow and recreational vehicles so that the lives or safety or the public might be endangered punishable by a \$250 to \$1,000 fine. If such operation causes serious bodily injury punishment is up to 2.5 years in jail or a \$200 to \$5,000 fine, or both. If such operation causes the death of another punishment is up to 2.5 years in a house of correction or up to 5 years in state prison or up to a \$5,000 fine, or both.

If the operator leaves the scene after knowingly colliding with or otherwise causing: (i) over \$500 damage to another snow or recreational vehicle punishment is a \$250 to \$1,000 fine; or (ii) bodily injury to another punishment is a \$500 to \$1,000 fine.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 – Increases the penalty in Section 26B for leaving the scene after knowingly colliding with or otherwise causing bodily injury to another to up to 1 year in jail or a fine between \$500 to

\$1,000, or both. It further adds that the bodily injury does not result in the death of the other person.

Section 2 – Adds a new paragraph to Section 26B which adds the crime of leaving the scene after knowingly colliding with or otherwise causing bodily injury that result in the death of another person punished by up to 2.5 years in jail or a fine up to \$5,000, or both.

Sections 3 and 4 – Make the necessary referential updates required by the new paragraph added in Section 2.