

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
BILL SUMMARY**

**BILL NO.** H1854

**TITLE:** An Act relative to fires and explosions

**SPONSOR:** Rep. Jay D. Livingstone

**COSPONSORS:** None

**HEARING DATE:** May 6, 2025

**PRIOR HISTORY:** H1647 (2023-2024)  
H1752 (2021-2022)  
H3361 (2019-2020)  
H0898 (2017-2018)

**SENATE BILL:** None

**CURRENT LAW:** Section 5 of Chapter 266 of the General Laws makes maliciously or willfully burning or aiding in the burning of personal property valued over \$25 a crime punishable by three years in prison or a fine and a year and half in a house of corrections.

Section 7 of Chapter 266 of the General Laws makes wantonly or recklessly burning standing or growing wood of another a crime punishable by a fine of \$1,000- or 2-years imprisonment.

Section 8 of Chapter 266 of the General Laws makes setting a fire not intended to cause harm that causes an injury to another a crime punishable by a fine of \$1,000- or 2-years imprisonment. Additionally, towns can recover the cost of extinguishing fired from people who start them.

**BILL SUMMARY:** Section 1 – Adds new Section to Chapter 266 punishing a person who starts a fire in the process of manufacturing-controlled substances that causes damage or injury with up to 10 years in prison or 2.5 years in a house of corrections.

Section 2 – Adds a new paragraph to Section 5 of Chapter 266 punishing a person who sets a fire on school grounds that results in

damage or destruction of a school building with 2.5 years in prison or a house of corrections.

Section 3 – Adds a new paragraph to Section 7 punishing a person who endangers the property or person of another with fire or an incendiary device with up to 2 years' incarceration or not more than a \$1,000 fine.

Section 4 – Replaces Section 8 with language breaking the punishment setting a fire not intended to cause harm that causes an injury to another into two parts: (1) if less than \$5,000 in damages result the current penalties apply; or (2) if more than \$5,000 in damages result the punishment is up to 5 years in prison or 2.5 years in a house of correction.