JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1594
TITLE:	An Act relative to controlling and abusive litigation.
SPONSOR:	Rep. Natalie M. Blais
COSPONSOR(S):	Rep. Susannah M. Whipps Rep. Lindsay N. Sabadosa Rep. Patrick Joseph Kearney Rep. Natalie M. Higgins Rep. Samantha Montano Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier Rep. Mike Connolly Sen. Bruce E. Tarr Rep. Tram T. Nguyen Rep. Danillo A. Sena Rep. Leigh Davis Sen. Joanne M. Comerford Sen. Jason M. Lewis Rep. Homar Gómez Rep. Adrianne P. Ramos Rep. Mindy Domb Rep. Patricia A. Duffy Rep. James J. O'Day Rep. Vanna Howard Rep. David H. LeBoeuf Sen. Mark Montigny Rep. Margaret Scarsdale
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1399 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILL:	S1205 (Moore)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 6F of Chapter 231 of the General Laws grants courts the authority to find that the claims, defenses, setoffs or counterclaims of civil litigants are insubstantial, frivolous and not advanced in good faith and empowers the courts to award attorney's fees and reasonable costs for litigation to the other party.
BILL SUMMARY:	Introduces a new chapter, 209E, to the General Laws. • Newly adds and defines "controlling" and "abusive" litigation as litigation where: 1) the parties have a familial or household relationship; 2) the court finds that either a party has been found to have committed abuse under Massachusetts law or could have been charged with abuse; 3) the court finds that the offending party is initiating, continuing or advancing litigation for the purpose of abuse; and 4) at least one of the following factors applies: (i) the claims are unwarranted by law; (ii) there is no evidence to support the claims; or (iii) the issue at hand has already been litigated and disposed of unfavorably to the party filing, initiating, advancing or continuing the litigation.

- Provides that parties may request the court to issue an order restricting controlling and abusive litigation if the above circumstances are met. The request can be made in response to the filing of litigation, by motion during a case, in an answer or response to a motion, and orally in any hearing. The court may determine on its own if the litigation meets the above definition.
- Establishes circumstances in which there will be a rebuttable presumption of controlling and abusive litigation: (i) the same or substantially similar parties have litigated against each other in the last five years, (ii) the same or substantially similar issues between the same or substantially similar parties have been brought to court and dismissed on the merits, (iii) within the last ten years the alleged violator has been sanctioned for controlling and abusive litigation, been found not to be supported by good grounds, interposed for the delay or found to be frivolous or brought in bad faith involving the same opposing party or (iv) another court system found the alleged violator to have engaged in controlling and abusive legislation.
- Requires that if a court finds controlling and abusive legislation occurred then it must dismiss, deny, strike or resolve any disposition with prejudice, impose the costs of the harassed party's litigation and court fees on the harasser, and impose prefiling restrictions on any new actions filed by the offending party.
- Establishes that a party found in violation of this statute and restricted by court order will be prevented from filing litigation against the protected party in the future.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1622
TITLE:	An Act removing barriers to justice in the workplace.
SPONSOR:	Rep. Mike Connolly and Rep. Natalie M. Higgins
COSPONSORS:	Rep. James K. Hawkins Rep. Danillo A. Sena
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1424 (2023-2024) H1641 (2021-2022)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 5 of Chapter 151B of the General Laws creates a process for the filing of a report with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination when there is a violation of anti-discrimination laws in housing, advertising or admission and treatment within public accommodations. Currently there is a requirement to file within 300 days of the alleged act of discrimination.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Extends the filing period in Section 5 from 300 days to 3 years.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1630
TITLE:	An Act relative to the examination of evidence rooms and evidentiary procedures
SPONSOR:	Rep. Mark J. Cusack
COSPONSOR:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2026
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1430 (2023-2024) H1506 (2021-2022) H.3266 (2019-2020) H4553 (2017-2018)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Regulation 515 CMR 7.00 issued under Section 16B of Chapter 278A of the General Laws establishes the rules and procedures for storage, disposal and care of evidence held by any state authority on behalf of the Commonwealth. It requires that evidence be stored in a way that prevents its destruction or deterioration until ordered destroyed by the court. Different types of substances are held in different manners all designed to protect their evidentiary value in proper chain of custody.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Adds a section to Chapter 276 of the General Laws requiring the department of any police force in the commonwealth to conduct (a) an annual random-sampling audit of the lesser of 10% of the total number of items or 50 items to be compared to evidence logbooks to ensure proper storage; (b) semi-annual inspection of evidence and property room; (c) a full audit every 5 years of the evidence and property held. A report and findings must be submitted within 30 days of completion. The first 5-year full audit must take place within 1 year of the effective date of this law. All moneys seized by a department must be deposited into an interest-hearing account unless they physically hold evidentiary value. Departments must record any evidence or property no longer in custody.

Section 2 - requires the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a study of the licensing of incinerators for the disposal of controlled substances and submit a report of its findings to a variety of legislative joint committees by July 1, 2027.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1636
TITLE:	An Act relative to clarity and consistency for the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board
SPONSOR:	Rep. Michael S. Day and Rep. David M. Rogers
CO-SPONSOR:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1439 (2023-2024) H1518 (2021-2022) H3564 (2019-2020)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 18 ¾ of Chapter 6A of the General Laws sets forth the authority and function of the Secretary of Public Safety. This includes establishing data collection and reporting standards for criminal justice agencies and the trial court including: (i) our correctional population; (ii) recidivism rates; and (iii) racial and ethnic composition of the criminal justice population of the Commonwealth. This includes the formation of a cross-tracking system so that anonymized cross-agency data is made available to the public. Section 11 of Chapter 7D creates an inter-branch, interagency oversight board to monitor to meet quarterly to ensure that the justice reinvestment policies on data collection and its availability to the public achieve anticipated goals.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Amends Section 18 ¾ to add specific reference to the necessary participation of the probation service, parole board, EOPSS and the several District Attorneys in both the data collection and cross-tracking system. Section 2 – Updates Section 11 to explicitly include several district attorneys in the purview of the board's review for compliance.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1640
TITLE:	An Act to modernize the roles and responsibilities of the Victim and Witness Assistance Board
SPONSOR:	Rep. Michael S. Day
COSPONSOR:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1440 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILL:	S1125 (Gomez)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 3 of Chapter 258B of the General Laws governs the rights afforded to victims and witnesses of crime and requires that a summary of rights be made available via posters at locations determined by the Victim and Witness Assistance Board. Section 4 of Chapter 258B of the General Laws creates the Victim and Witness Assistance Board which has the authority to designate an executive director and other staff and has the responsibility to: (i) oversee the implementation of operation of programs under the chapter; (ii) promulgate rules for the program plans and annual reports required; (iii) create and make available materials explaining victim and witness rights and services; (iv) assist hospitals and law enforcement in understanding, posting and disseminating notices of the rights afforded victims and witness of crime; and (v) assume management and administration of the Garden of Peace. Section 6 of Chapter 258B requires that each district attorney send an annual program plan by January 15 to the Victim and Witness Assistance Board, the secretary of administration and finance and the house and senate committees on ways and means.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - Amends Section 3 of Chapter 258B requiring that the Victim and Witness Assistance Board provide information on the rights afforded to victims and witnesses of crimes to police chiefs and court officials in both print and digital formats and in the top

five languages spoken at home, not including English, as determined by the most recent federal census data.

Section 2 - amends Section 4 of Chapter 258B by removing and replacing gendered pronouns.

Section 3 – Amends Section 4 of Chapter 258B granting the Victim and Witness Assistance Board additional duties including funding and supporting services available to victims, providing professional development and community education opportunities, advocating for policy and legislative initiatives related to victims' rights and services, and administering the SAFEPLAN advocacy program.

Section 4 – Amends Section 6 to no longer require District Attorneys send annual program plans to the Victim and Witness Assistance Board.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1642
TITLE:	An Act concerning the arrest without a warrant of persons on probation and temporary custody
SPONSOR:	Rep. Michael S. Day
CO-SPONSOR:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1441 (2023-2024) H1516 (2021-2022) H3281 (2019 – 2020)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 3 of Chapter 279 of the General laws sets the procedure and standards for an arrest and subsequent hearing of a person on probation with or without a warrant. A probation officer is authorized to arrest a probationer without a warrant and bring them before a court for sentencing or other lawful disposition of the case. The court, after a hearing, may revoke a suspended sentence and put it into full force and effect. Additionally, where a probation officer has probable cause to believe a probationer has violated their conditions of release, a probation officer is authorized to arrest or issue a warrant for the temporary custody of the probationer for a period not to exceed 72 hours or until the next sitting of the court.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - updates the language of Section 3 of Chapter 279 to expressly list who is given authority under the section. It further permits a court, at the hearing, to make any lawful disposition of the case not including continuing or revoking the suspension of the execution of the sentence. The probation warrant authorizes holding the person in custody only until the next sitting of the court rather than 72 hours as a cap and requires the probationer be brought before the next session of the court having jurisdiction over the place where the person is held or to the court that set the condition of release.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1655
TITLE:	An Act to promote victim service funding.
SPONSOR:	Rep. Marjorie C. Decker
COSPONSOR(S):	Rep. Estela A. Reyes
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	None
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 66 of Chapter 10 of the General Laws establishes the Victims of Drunk Driving Trust Fund which consists of monies paid to the courts from fees collected in drunk driving cases. Section 66A of Chapter 10 establishes the Victims of Human Trafficking Trust Fund which consists of proceeds and assets seized and forfeited in human trafficking cases and fines and assessments from criminal cases of human trafficking.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Adds to Section 66 of Chapter 10 all revenues received by the commonwealth from public and private sources as gifts, grants and donations. Section 2 – Adds to Section 66A of Chapter 10 all revenues received by the commonwealth from public and private sources as gifts, grants and donations.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1690
TITLE:	An Act relative to authorizing electronic signatures for criminal complaints
SPONSOR:	Rep. Carole A. Fiola
COSPONSORS:	Rep. Steven J. Ouellette
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H.1490 (2023-2024) H.1891 (2021-2022) H.1576 (2019-2020)
SENATE BILL:	S1135 (Jehlen)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 2 of Chapter 275 establishes the procedure for obtaining a complaint from a court or justices against someone who has threatened to commit a crime against the person or property of another. Section 22 of Chapter 276 of the General Laws establishes the procedure for submitting a complaint to court and obtaining a summons or warrant based on that complaint.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Adds language permitting complainants under Section 22 of Chapter 276 to electronically sign the complaint. Section 2- Removes requirement that law enforcement must be questioned under Section 22 of Chapter 276 by a justice before electronically signing if the complaint is signed under the pains and penalties of perjury. Section 3 – Adds language permitting complainants under Section 2 of Chapter 275 to electronically sign the complaint. Section 4 - Removes requirement that law enforcement must be questioned under Section 2 of Chapter 275 by a justice before

electronically signing if the complaint is signed under the pains and penalties of perjury.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1727
TITLE:	An Act relative to increasing racial diversity among judges in Massachusetts
SPONSOR:	Rep. Carlos Gonzalez
CO-SPONSOR:	Rep. Orlando Ramos
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1528 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 2A of Chapter 4 of the General Laws governs the establishment of special legislative commissions for the investigation and study of any matter.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - establishes a 15-member, special legislative commission to study the potential for legislative action to increase racial diversity among the judiciary in Massachusetts. The Commission would consist of: (i) the Chairs of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary or their designees, who shall serve as co-chairs; (ii) the Chair of the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus or a designee; (iii) the Chair of the Massachusetts House Asian Caucus or a designee; (iv) the Attorney General or a designee; (v) the Secretary of Public Safety and Security or a designee; (vi) the Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, Inc. or a designee; (vii) the President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People New England Area Conference or a designee; (viii) 2 appointees of the Governor's Council; and (ix) 8 appointees of the Governor, 1 from the Massachusetts Bar Association, 1 from the Boston Bar Association, 1 from the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association, 1 from the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys, 1 from the Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts, 1 from the Massachusetts District Attorney's Association or an Assistant District Attorney, and 1 from the Committee for Public Counsel Services. The appointees made by the Governor shall include

women and people of color proportionately to the commonwealth's population.

The Commission shall evaluate the current and historic state of racial diversity in the Commonwealth and submit a report to the Clerks of the House, Senate, Governor's Council and Governor by December 31, 2026.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1739
TITLE:	An Act relative to the designation of jury clerk in the Haverhill District Court.
SPONSOR:	Rep. Ryan M. Hamilton
COSPONSOR(S):	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	None
SENATE BILL:	S1107 (Finegold)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 10 of Chapter 218 of the General Laws authorizes clerks of District Courts to appoint assistant clerks. The maximum number of assistant clerks is determined by the statute. It also permits designated jurisdictions to place an assistant clerk in charge of six-person jury sessions who are paid by the Commonwealth as such.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Adds the Central District Court of northern Essex to the list of districts who can place clerks in charge of 6 person juries.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1740
TITLE:	An Act to simplify administrative aspect of evidentiary use of medical information
SPONSOR:	Rep. Christopher Hendricks
COSPONSOR:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1545 (2023-2024) H1638 (2021-2022) H3330 (2019-2020) H2260 (2017-2018) H1196 (2015-2016) H1214 (2013-2014) H2143 (2011-2012)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 79G of Chapter 233 of the General Laws governs the use of medical records as evidence in civil court proceedings. To be used as evidence, records relating to medical, dental, hospital services, prescriptions or orthopedic appliances rendered to or prescribed for an injured person must be subscribed and sworn to under the penalties of perjury by the physician, dentist, pharmacist, retailer of orthopedic appliances, or authorized agent of a hospital or health maintenance organization rendering such services. Once these records are properly authenticated, they are admissible as evidence of the: (i) fair and reasonable charge for such services; (ii) necessity of such services or treatments; (iii) diagnosis or prognosis of the physician or dentist; (iv) opinion of the physician or dentist as to proximate cause of the condition so diagnosed; (v) opinion of the physician or dentist as to disability or incapacity resulting from the condition so diagnosed.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - amends Section 79G to allow the authorized agent of a physician, dentist, pharmacist, or retailer of orthopedic appliances to also authenticate medical records and bills under this section.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1771
TITLE:	An Act regarding probation violations
SPONSOR:	Rep. Daniel J. Hunt
COSPONSORS:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1567 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILLS:	S1134 (Jehlen)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 133 of Chapter 127 of the General Laws permits the granting of parole permits by the parole board to prisoners subject to their jurisdiction but not until a prisoner with a state prison sentence has served the minimum term. Sentence of imprisonment to the state prison shall not be suspended in whole or in part. Section 3 of Chapter 279 sets the procedure and standards for an arrest and subsequent hearing of a person on probation with or without a warrant. A probation officer is authorized to arrest a probationer without a warrant and bring them before a court for sentencing or other lawful disposition of the case. The court, after a hearing, may revoke a suspended sentence and put it into full force and effect. Additionally, where a probation officer has probable cause to believe a probationer has violated their conditions of release, a probation officer is authorized to arrest or issue a warrant for the temporary custody of the probationer for a period not to exceed 72 hours or until the next sitting of the court.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – strikes the language in Section 133 of Chapter 127 that prohibits suspending state prison sentences. Section 2 – updates the language in Section 3 of Chapter 279 to affirm that, if a suspended sentence is to the state prison and is revoked, the sentence shall be in full force and effect. Adds that if the suspended sentence is to the house of correction and is revoked, the court can now have discretion to impose (i) the full term of the

suspended sentence; or (ii) a portion of the suspended sentence with the remaining balance suspended.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1775
TITLE:	An act establishing a self-defense exception
SPONSOR:	Rep. Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
CO-SPONSOR:	Rep. Kimberly N. Ferguson Rep. Todd M. Smola Rep. Paul K. Frost
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2026
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1592 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 99 of Chapter 272 of the General Laws prohibits the willful: (i) interception of any wire or oral communication; (ii) edit or alteration with any tape, transcription or recording of oral or wire communications with intent to present in any proceeding under oath; (iii) disclosure or use of the contents of any wire or oral communication knowing it was obtained through interception; (iv) possession of an interception device with intent to commit an unlawful interception. Narrow exceptions are included for investigative and law enforcement officers who obtain permission through a warrant for designated offenses or to protect the safety of undercover officers or witnesses. "Designated offense" includes a variety of offenses in connection with organized crime including arson, burglary, extortion, witness intimidation, kidnapping, larceny, murder, drug offenses, perjury, prostitution among others.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - amends Section 99 of Chapter 272 to include an exception to the prohibition on using secret devices by private individuals if the private individual: (i) is a party to the encounter being surveilled; (ii) not employed or acting under the auspices of a law enforcement entity; and (iii) has reasonable fear that the other party intends physical harm to them, another or themselves.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1789
TITLE:	An Act relative to profits from crime
SPONSOR:	Rep. Bradley H. Jones Jr.
COSPONSORS:	Rep. Kimberly N. Ferguson Rep. Todd M. Smola Rep. Paul K. Frost
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1575 (2023-2024) H1686 (2021-2022) H3343 (2019-2020) H865 (2017-2018)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Chapter 258C of the General Laws outlines the standards, processes and rules for the compensation of victims of violent crimes in the Commonwealth. The Victim Compensation and Assistance division of the Attorney General is given the authority to administer the provisions of the Chapter including designating a program director and other staff, promulgating rules and regulations and apply for and receive funds. Section 2A of Chapter 260 requires actions of tort, actions of contract to recover for personal injuries and actions of replevin to commence within 3 years after the cause of action accrues.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Creates a new Chapter 258F in the General Laws that requires any person who contracts with a defendant for consideration which the person knows, or reasonably should know, constitutes proceeds of a crime to submit the contract to the Division of Victim Compensation and Assistance who determines if the proceeds under the contract are substantially related to a crime. If so determined, the person must pay the division any monies owed to the perpetrator of the crime for deposit into an account made available to the victims of crime. It also sets forth the procedure for submitting, determining, appealing, and enforcing claims including

a requirement of filing a bond payable to the victim and the procedure for petitioning the Court for an order of enforcement.

Section 2 – Adds to Section 2A of Chapter 260 that actions for torts against a criminal defendant by the victim shall be tolled during a period of incarceration, parole or probation of the defendant for the crime committed against the victim.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H1791

TITLE: An Act establishing mandatory post release supervision in the Commonwealth

SPONSOR: Rep. Bradley H. Jones, Jr.

COSPONSORS:
Rep. Kimberly N. Ferguson
Rep. Paul K. Frost
Rep. Todd M. Smola
Rep. Alyson M. Sullivan-Almeida
Rep. Steven Ultrino

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY:
H1590 (2023-2024)
H1700 (2021-2022)
H3340 (2019-2020)
H855 (2017-2018)
H1413 (2015-2016)
H1405 (2013-2014)
H2208 (2011-2012)
H1446 (2009-2010)
H1515 (2007-2008)

SENATE BILL: None

CURRENT LAW: Section 5 of Chapter 27 of the General Laws establishes parole board powers and duties including outlining requirements for the composition of the Board and establishing guidelines to determine when incarcerated people can become eligible for parole.

Section 133A of Chapter 127 outlines an incarcerated persons eligibility for parole, notice and hearing requirements, parole permits, revision of terms and conditions, revocation, arrest, right to counsel and funds for experts. It specifically exempts prisoners servicing life sentences for murder in the first degree who were 18 at the time of the murder from eligibility.

Section 85 of Chapter 276 outlines the powers and duties of the Parole Board

Section 99 of Chapter 276 outlines the powers and duties of the Commissioner of Probation

Section 24 of Chapter 279 establishes indeterminate sentences for those going to state prison who are not habitual offenders. It also establishes sentencing guidelines for the aged 14 to 17.

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1- Amends Section 5 of Chapter 27 to add a sentence explicitly requiring the Parole Board to oversee post release supervision set forth in Section 133D of Chapter 127 and Chapter 127A.

Section 2 - Inserts a new Chapter 127A adding a period of post-release supervision of 25 per cent of the maximum term of incarceration to all sentences except life sentences without possibility of parole. It provides exemptions for those who successfully complete probation, receive a parole permit and successfully complete parole or those sentenced to lifetime parole. It also allows for early termination of the program after 9 months of successful completion of the program.

Section 3- Amends Section 85 of Chapter 276 by inserting a clause adding post release supervision to the duties of parole officers. The board is responsible for overseeing those who were incarcerated for more than a year.

Section 4- Amends Section 99 of Chapter 276 by inserting a clause adding post release supervision to the duties of the Commission of Probation. The Commissioner is responsible for overseeing those who were incarcerated for a year or less in an HOC or jail.

Section 5- Amends Section 24 of Chapter 279 by striking the clause that establishes a minimum sentence of 15 years in state prison for those with life sentences. It replaces it to make the minimum at least 20 per cent greater than the minimum term.

Section 6- Sets an effective date for all crimes that take place on or after January 1, 2026.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1813
TITLE:	An Act promoting fairness in parole.
SPONSOR:	Rep. Mary S. Keefe
COSPONSOR(S):	Rep. Patricia A. Duffy Rep. Danillo A. Sena
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	None
SENATE BILL:	S1084 (Eldridge)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 149A of Chapter 127 of the General Laws permits a parole officer who believes that a parolee has violated parole to issue a warrant with the permission of a parole supervisor or other superior officer for temporary custody of the parolee. The parole board has the right to withdraw said warrant for temporary custody without affecting the validity of any subsequent warrants issued
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Makes the following changes to Section 149A • A warrant can only be issued for temporary custody if the violation includes: (i) the intentional unauthorized removal of a GPS monitoring device, (ii) making contact with a victim of crime in connection with the parolee's criminal offense or their household member, (iii) a violation of an abuse prevention order issued pursuant to chapter 209A or a harassment prevention order issued pursuant to chapter 258E or (iv) making plans to imminently flee the commonwealth. • If one of the conditions above is not met, then the parole officer must make a written request to a member of the parole board who must find that the parolee has violated the conditions of their parole and can then issue a warrant for temporary custody. • No later than 15 days after a parolee is placed in custody a preliminary evidentiary hearing must be held to determine

whether a parolee has violated a condition of parole must be held. If the hearing officer finds by a preponderance of the evidence that a violation has occurred, the hearing officer shall order that the parolee remain in custody pending a final revocation hearing of the parole board after considering the following factors: (i) the nature and seriousness of the violation, (ii) if there is a connection between the violation of parole and the underlying offense that the parolee committed, (iii) the parolee's prior criminal record and (iv) the protection of the public, a victim of crime in connection with the parolee's criminal offense or their household member. They must make their ruling within 48 hours.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1826
TITLE:	An Act relative to the transfer of the Victim Compensation Fund
SPONSOR:	Rep. Kathleen R. LaNatra
COSPONSOR(S):	A.G. Andrea J. Campbell Sen. Michael O. Moore Rep. Michelle L. Badger
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	None
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 11K of Chapter 12 of the General Laws establishes within the Attorney General department a division of Victim Compensation and Assistance to administer the provisions of Chapter 258C. Section 4 of Chapter 258B of the General Laws creates the Victim and Witness Assistance Board which has the authority to appoint an executive director and other staff and has the responsibility to: (i) oversee the implementation and operation of programs under the chapter; (ii) promulgate rules for the program plans and annual reports required; (iii) create and make available materials explaining victim and witness rights and services; (iv) assist hospitals and law enforcement in understanding, posting and disseminating notices of the rights afforded victims and witness of crime; and (v) assume management and administration of the Garden of Peace. Chapter 258C of the General Laws outlines the standards, process and rules for the compensation of victims of violent crimes in the Commonwealth. The Victim Compensation and Assistance division of the Attorney General is given the authority to administer the provisions of the Chapter including designating a program director and other staff, promulgating rules and regulations and apply for and receive funds.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 – Repeals Section 11K of Chapter 12.

Section 2 - Adds to Section 4 of Chapter 258B that the Board has the responsibility to administer the provisions of Chapter 258C through the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance and that its executive director has the authority to promulgate rules and regulations as necessary to carry out Chapter 258C.

Sections 3 through 6 – Amend Section 1 of Chapter 258C to add a definition for "Agency" which is the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance, remove the definition of "Department", replace the definition of "Division" with a definition for "Director" which is the executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance and update gendered pronouns in the section.

Sections 7 through 11 – Update Sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 258C pursuant to the changes proposed in this bill and removes gendered pronouns.

Section 12 – Strikes and replaces Section 4 of Chapter 258C with language providing that the provisions of the Chapter will be administered by the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance which has the authority to designate a director and other staff, promulgating rules and regulations and apply for and receive funds.

Sections 13 through 30 – Update Sections 5 to 12 of Chapter 258C pursuant to the changes proposed in this bill and to remove gendered pronouns.

Section 31 – Adds a new Section 15 to Chapter 258C making all agency records and information obtained in connection with a claim for crime victim compensation confidential and privileged. Disclosure is only permitted: (i) by the agency for processing a claim or responding to a court action; (ii) for information exchanged between the claimant, their authorized representative and the agency; or (iii) upon a court order.

Section 32 – The Act shall take effect 180 days after passage.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1827
TITLE:	An Act relative to police reports involving railroad fatalities.
SPONSOR:	Rep. Kathleen R. LaNatra
COSPONSOR(S):	Rep. Michelle L. Badger Sen. Michael D. Brady
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H4731 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILL:	S1106 (Fernandes)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 97D of Chapter 41 of the General Laws requires that all reports of rape and sexual assault, all reports of abuse perpetrated by family or household members and all communications between police officers and victims of such offenses or abuse be kept confidential by law enforcement officials. The reports are to be available to victims, the attorney of the victim, witness advocates and counselors. Chapter 160 establishes the rules and regulations for railroads in the Commonwealth.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 – Introduces a new section at the end of Chapter 160 that requires police reports and communications between police and crew members about a railroad fatality to be kept confidential. They are to be made available to (i) the host railroad, (ii) the railroad employer of the employee mentioned in such reports and (iii) any other person authorized by judicial order to obtain such information. Violating the section is punishable by a fine of up to $10,000 and/or up to 1 year imprisonment.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1848
TITLE:	An Act relative to judicial discretion for probation
SPONSOR:	Rep. Kate Lipper-Garabedian
COSPONSORS:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1634 (2023-2024) H1748 (2021-2022)
SENATE BILLS:	S1162 (Lewis)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 87 of Chapter 276 of the General Laws allows the Superior, District and Juvenile Courts to place those who are pretrial, convicted or when deemed proper on probation with conditions it deems proper. There is an exception for those persons 18 or older who have committed certain offenses. Section 87A of Chapter 276 of the General Laws lists the permitted conditions of probations which may be imposed by a Court including rehabilitative programs, community service and substance use housing. It prohibits a probation violation solely based on the possession or use of a prescribed substance or medical marijuana.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - Adds to Section 87 of Chapter 276 specified considerations for a judge to make when placing a defendant on probation: (i) age; (ii) nature of the defendant's military service, if any; (iii) education; (iv) injuries or wounds sustained; (v) military discipline record, if defendant served in military; (vi) past and current medical status; (vii) family and medical psychological reports; (viii) nature of past criminal convictions, if any; (ix) age at the time of previous criminal convictions, if any; (x) employment status; (xi) arrest record; (xii) nature of current criminal matter and if violent, nature and extent of injuries and relationship of victim to defendant; (xiii) availability of family and community support

systems; (xiv) proposed probation terms; and (xv) any other facts or circumstances bearing on pre-trial probation.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1894
TITLE:	An Act promoting equity in traffic stops
SPONSOR:	Rep. Samantha Montaño
COSPONSOR(S):	Rep. Danillo A. Sena
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	None
SENATE BILL:	S1182 (Miranda)
CURRENT LAW:	Article Fourteen of the Massachusetts constitution provides that every subject has a right to be secure from all unreasonable searches and seizures of their person, house, papers and possessions. Chapter 90 of the General Laws governs motor vehicles and aircrafts
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - Adds a new section into Chapter 90 of the General Laws which makes all evidence obtained during a traffic stop inadmissible in any criminal proceeding if unrelated to the traffic violation that was the basis for the stop unless the law enforcement had reasonable suspicion of an unlawful act prior to initiating a stop. It is the commonwealth's burden to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that reasonable suspicion of criminal activity existed prior to the initiation of the traffic stop. Any evidence obtained in violation of this section will be suppressed and inadmissible in any criminal proceeding. An individual subject to a traffic stop in violation of this section may pursue any available civil remedy including injunctive relief or monetary damages.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO: H1902

TITLE: An Act relative to the reliability of testifying informants

SPONSOR: Rep. John F. Moran

COSPONSOR: None

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1649 (2023-2024) (Livingstone)

SENATE BILL: None

CURRENT LAW: Section 21 of Chapter 233 of the General Laws outlines how a prior conviction may be used to affect a witness's credibility during testimony and sets time standards for their use.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 - Adds a new section to Chapter 233 clarifying the standards and procedures for determining the reliability of informants testifying in criminal proceedings. It defines "testifying informant" as someone who is purporting to testify about admissions made to them by the accused and has requested, received, or may receive a benefit in connection with such testimony. A "benefit" includes any prosecutorial leniency, immunity or financial reward. Each district attorney's office and the Attorney General's office must create and maintain a centralized record on informants, including any deals made or offered to informants which will be collected by EOPSS and made available to prosecutors statewide. The legislation outlines the disclosures required by the Commonwealth on confidential informants required by the Massachusetts Rules of Criminal Procedure. A reliability hearing must be held to determine whether the testimony of the informant is reliable.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H1904

TITLE: An Act relative to criminal investigations

SPONSOR: Rep. Michael J. Moran

COSPONSORS: None

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1691 (2023-2024)
H1691 (2021-2022)
H1527 (2019-2020)
H2326 (2017-2018)
H1499 (2015-2016)

SENATE BILL: None

CURRENT LAW: Section 99 of Chapter 272 of the General laws prohibits the willful: (i) interception of any wire or oral communication; (ii) edit or alteration of any tape, transcription or recording of oral or wire communications with intent to present in any proceeding under oath; (iii) disclosure or use of the contents of any wire or oral communication knowing it was obtained through interception; (iv) possession of an interception device with intent to commit an unlawful interception.

Exceptions are included for investigative and law enforcement officers who obtain permission through a warrant for designated offenses or to protect the safety of undercover officers or witnesses. "Designated offense" includes offenses in connection with organized crime including arson, burglary, extortion, witness intimidation, kidnapping, larceny, murder, drug offenses, perjury, and prostitution.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 - inserts language into Section 99 of Chapter 272 allowing law enforcements officials conducting an authorized investigation of crimes against a person or of arson to conduct a one-party recording with a suspect in a police facility if that facility has clear and conspicuous notices that conversations may be recorded without

additional notice after the individual had been given their Miranda warnings.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1945
TITLE:	An Act establishing a commission to study judicial accountability in the Commonwealth
SPONSOR:	Rep. Orlando Ramos and Rep. Carlos González
COSPONSORS:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1727 (2023-2024) H1843 (2021-2022)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 2A of Chapter 4 of the General Laws governs the establishment of special legislative commissions for the investigation and study of any matter.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - Creates a 29-member special commission on judicial accountability to study the nomination, selection, appointment and oversight of judges in the Commonwealth and to develop recommendations to improve accountability including reappointment standards. Commission members shall include: (i) 3 members appointed by the Governor; (ii) 2 members of the House of Representatives, 1 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 1 appointed by the minority leader; (iii) 2 members of the Senate, 1 appointed by the President of the Senate, and 1 appointed by the Minority Leader; (iv) the President of the Massachusetts Bar Association or their designee; (v) the President of the Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts or their designee; (vi) the President of the Barnstable Bar Association or their designee; (vii) the President of the Berkshire County Bar Association or their designee; (viii) the President of the Boston Bar Association or their designee; (ix) the President of the Bristol County Bar Association or their designee; (x) the President of the Essex County Bar Association or their designee; (xi) the President of the Franklin County Bar Association or their designee; (xii) the President of the Hampden County Bar Association or their designee;

the President of the Hampshire County Bar Association or their designee; (xiii) the President of the League of Women Voters or their designee; (xiv) the President of the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys or their designee; (xv) the President of the Massachusetts Association of Women Lawyers or their designee; (xvi) the President of the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association or their designee; (xvii) the President of the Massachusetts Judges Conference or their designee; (xviii) the President of the Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association or their designee; (xix) the President of the Middlesex Bar Association or their designee; (xx) the President of the Norfolk County Bar Association or their designee; (xxi) the President of the Plymouth County Bar Association or their designee; (xxii) the President of the Suffolk County Bar Association or their designee; (xxiii) the President of the Woman's Bar Association or their designee; and (xxiv) the President of the Worcester County Bar Association or their designee.

The commission shall elect a chair, a vice chair and any other officers as necessary, and members shall receive no additional compensation for their services. The commission may receive appropriated or donated funds as needed. The commission shall convene its first meeting within one month of appointment and shall submit its first report of recommendations not later than December 1, 2021 to the Clerks of the House of Representatives and the Senate who shall forward a copy of the report to the House and Senate Chairs of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H1960
TITLE:	An Act establishing presumptive parole
SPONSOR:	Rep. Dave M. Rogers
COSPONSORS:	Sen. Joanne M. Comerford
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1738 (2023-2024) H3590 (2017-2018) H1848 (2021-2022) H1541 (2019-2020)
SENATE BILL:	None
CURRENT LAW:	Section 130 of Chapter 127 of the General Laws establishes guidelines for granting of parole permits, records of decisions, terms and conditions of parole and certificates of termination of sentence. It enables the Parole Board to grant parole permits following a risk and needs assessment that reviews the applicant's behavior while incarcerated.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - Amends Section 130 of Chapter 127 updating the standards for issuing parole to require presumptive parole. Parole may not be granted if the Parole Board finds by a clear and convincing evidence that the prisoner will not live and remain at liberty without violating the law, but otherwise, a parole permit shall be granted at their first date of eligibility and at any subsequent review hearing. The bill requires the Board to review a person's disability to determine whether it will impede their ability to be successful on parole. If so, they must arrange for an examination to determine how to mitigate these risks while considering parole. If an incarcerated person requires specialized care and cannot secure adequate housing, the Board shall notify the Commissioners of the Department of Public Health and the Department of Mental Health to secure a placement within 60 days. No individual who has been granted parole shall remain incarcerated for failure to secure an appropriate home plan.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H1961

TITLE: An Act relative to life without parole

SPONSOR: Rep. Dave M. Rogers

COSPONSORS: None

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2026

PRIOR HISTORY: H1739 (2023-2024)
H1852 (2021-2022)
H1542 (2019-2020)

SENATE BILL: None

CURRENT LAW: Section 133A of Chapter 127 of the General Laws outlines an incarcerated persons eligibility for parole, notice and hearing requirements, parole permits, revision of terms and conditions, revocation, arrest, right to counsel and funds for experts. It specifically exempts prisoners serving a life sentence for murder in the first degree who were 18 at the time of the murder from eligibility for parole.

Section 133B of Chapter 127 requires the Parole Board to, within 60 days before the expiration of 2/3rds of the highest sentence and at least once every ensuing 2-year period, consider the merits of releasing a prisoner on parole. Habitual offenders are exempted from parole eligibility.

Section 2 of Chapter 265 requires persons found guilty of murder in the first degree be ineligible for parole unless the offense was committed between their 14th and 18th birthday.

Section 24 of Chapter 279 sets the standards for terms of imprisonment for offenders including persons sentenced for life for murder between the ages of 14 and 18 years old.

Section 25 of Chapter 279 sets the standards for who is considered a habitual criminal under the law and requires such persons be sentenced for any felony to the maximum term provided by law.

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1 - Amends Section 133A of chapter 127 to expand parole eligibility to persons serving a life sentence for first-degree murder, exempting only those whom the court specifically determined are not eligible for parole.

Section 2 - Amends the final paragraph of Section 133B of chapter 127 to correct a clerical error.

Section 3 – Removes the ineligibility for parole from Section 2 of Chapter 265 and replaces it with the indeterminant sentencing guidelines under Section 24 of Chapter 279. This is the standard however, the offender must have at least a 35-year sentence and the court can still find that the offender ineligible for parole.

Section 4 - Amends Section 24 of Chapter 279 by adding a requirement that a person over 18 years old who commits murder be sentenced to a minimum of 35 years and gives the Court the option of determining parole eligibility.

Section 5 - Amends Section 25 of Chapter 279 by adding a clause that the court may set parole eligibility at 35 years or greater for a habitual offender who would otherwise face a life sentence without eligibility for parole.

Section 6 - Asserts that this Act shall only apply to those sentenced after the effective date.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO: H1965

TITLE: An Act relative to compensation for victims of wrongful conviction

SPONSOR: Rep. Jeff Roy

CO-SPONSORS: Rep. Christopher J. Worrell
Rep. Sean Reid

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1752 (2023-2024)

SENATE BILL: S1132 (Jehlen)

CURRENT LAW: Section 9 of Chapter 211D of the General Laws requires the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) establish standards for their counsel divisions which include a method for the provision of social services or social service referrals.

G.L. c. 258D governs wrongful conviction claims by:

- Defining the class of persons eligible for bringing a claim against the Commonwealth for damages for an erroneous felony conviction resulting in incarceration. To prevail in this action the person must show by clear and convincing evidence that they meet 7 requirements.
- Outlining how the court or jury may determine the damages payable to the claimant if successful. It further lists other orders the court may include as part of its judgment including requiring the commonwealth to provide the claimant with certain services and waive tuition fees. It sets a cap on damages at $1 million.
- Awarding a claimant, who prevails, the costs of litigation and reasonable attorneys' fees.
- Requiring the court to enter an order directing either the expungement or sealing of the claimant's records of the offense.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 – Adds to Section 9 of Chapter 211D that the method for the provision of social services must include referrals for transitional

services relating to the physical, social and emotional needs of persons after release from incarceration.

Section 2 – Adds a new Section 18 to Chapter 211D requiring CPCS to establish, supervise and maintain a system for the assignment of social services advocates to assist indigent defendants eligible for transitional assistance pursuant to Chapter 258D.

Section 3 – Strikes and replaces the entirety of Chapter 258D.

- Creates a Division of Erroneous Felony Convictions Compensation within the Office of the Attorney General to administer the provisions of the Chapter. Sets a procedure for the process and review of erroneous conviction claims.
- Expands the class of persons eligible to apply for compensation.
- Requires CPCS appoint counsel for any indigent claimant.
- Changes the burden of proof to prevail on a wrongful conviction claim from "clear and convincing" evidence to a "preponderance of the" evidence.
- Removes the $1 million cap on and sets compensation at $115,000 per year of incarceration and not less than $57,500 for each year of parole, probation or term of registry as a sex offender, whichever is greater.
- Adds to the award MassHealth benefits, reentry planning, transitional assistance and housing assistance. Includes an initial payment of $15,000 from the Trial Court and potential funds for social services advocates provided by CPCS.
- Permits an appeal of a denial of compensation to the Division of Administrative Law Appeals.

Section 4 – For the first year after the effective date of the Act, a person may either file under the old or the new Chapter 258D standards.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H2029
TITLE:	An Act to eliminate standard conditions in probation
SPONSOR:	Rep. Andres X. Vargas
COSPONSORS:	None
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1804 (2023-2024) H1912 (2021-2022)
SENATE BILL:	S1129 (Gomez)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 87 of Chapter 276 of the General Laws allows the Superior, District and Juvenile Courts to place people, who are pretrial or when deemed proper, on probation with conditions it deems proper. There is an exception for those persons 18 or older who have committed certain offenses. Section 87A of Chapter 276 lists the permitted conditions of probation which may be imposed by a Court including rehabilitative programs, community service and substance use pretrial housing. It prohibits a probation violation solely based on the possession or use of a prescribed substance or medical marijuana.
BILL SUMMARY:	Section 1 - Amends Section 87A of Chapter 276 by requiring that all probation shall be presumed administrative, and no condition shall be ordered unless it specifically addresses the characteristics of the person and the crime for which probation is being ordered. The judge must consider whether any condition ordered would have a rehabilitative effect or serve a legitimate public safety goal. Section 2 – Adds a new Section 87BB to Chapter 176 establishing provisions which determine the length of probation and suspension of sentences. The maximum length of a period of probation or suspension of sentence cannot exceed 3 years for a felony or 1 year

for a misdemeanor, even when serving probation for multiple convictions. The limitations of this subsection do not apply for anyone convicted of a sex offense under G.L. c. 6 s. 178C if the sentencing court determines a longer probation or suspension of sentence will lead to better outcomes. It also does not apply to any offender who the court determines on the record that a longer probation or suspension of sentence is necessary, but excess of these limitations shall be administrative only. The sentencing court may require 90-day extensions if needed to complete substance use programs, however, a court is still permitted to terminate probation before substance use programs are complete. The total period of probation or suspension of sentences may not exceed the maximum commitment provided by law.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO.	H2030
TITLE:	An Act to implement recommendations of the Commission on structural racism in the parole process
SPONSOR:	Rep. Andres X. Vargas
COSPONSORS:	Rep. Orlando Ramos
HEARING DATE:	June 3, 2025
PRIOR HISTORY:	H1805 (2023-2024)
SENATE BILL:	S1128 (Gomez)
CURRENT LAW:	Section 4 of Chapter 27 of the General Laws establishes the Parole Board and outlines its membership and responsibilities. Section 5 of Chapter 27 establishes parole board powers and duties including outlining requirements for the composition of the Board and establishing guidelines to determine when incarcerated people can become eligible for parole. Section 133A of Chapter 127 outlines an incarcerated persons eligibility for parole, notice and hearing requirements, parole permits, revision of terms and conditions, revocation, arrest, right to counsel and funds for experts. It specifically exempts prisoners serving a life sentence for murder in the first degree who were 18 at the time of the murder from eligibility. Section 136 of Chapter 127 requires the Board conduct a parole hearing within 60 days of parole eligibility for all prisoners unless their sentence is under 1 year or more time is required in the interests of justice. The Commissioner must submit all information on the prisoner prior to the hearing.
BILL SUMMARY:	Sections 1 & 2 - Amends Section 4 of chapter 27 by expanding the membership of the Parole Board from 7 to 9 members and removing the requirement that one member have experience in forensic psychology. Mandates that at least 3 members of the Board have at

least 5 years of experience in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, social work or the treatment of substance use disorders. It also stipulates that 1 of those 3 members be a licensed mental health professional, and 1 of the 9 members of the board be someone who has been incarcerated and successfully completed the parole process. Requires that said formerly incarcerated individual must have completed the parole process at least 3 years prior and must have a professional or volunteer background in at least 1 of the following areas: psychology, mental health or substance use, transitional housing, re-entry after incarceration, public safety or law.

Section 3 - Amends Section 5 of Chapter 27 to add a paragraph stipulating that no condition of parole may be ordered unless that condition specifically addresses the characteristics of the person and the crime for which they are being paroled. Requires the Board to consider whether any condition ordered would have a rehabilitative effect or serve a legitimate public safety goal based on current criminal recidivism and rehabilitation research with clear and convincing evidence.

Section 4 - Adds a new Section 8 to Chapter 27 to require data collection practices from the Parole Board.

Section 5 - Amends Section 136 of Chapter 127 to require the Board to report on the decisions for all cases that have led to approval or denial of parole.

Section 6 - Amends Section 133A of Chapter 127 to require the Board to conduct a public hearing no later than 90 days before a person’s parole eligibility date, and the hearing must be before a panel of at least 6 members of the Board for purposes of granting parole.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H2052

TITLE: An Act to reduce mass incarceration

SPONSOR: Rep. Christopher J. Worrell

COSPONSORS:

Rep. John F. Moran
Rep. Lindsay N. Sabadosa
Rep. Christine P. Barber
Rep. Samantha Montaño
Rep. Priscila S. Sousa
Rep. Russell E. Holmes
Sen. Jason M. Lewis
Rep. Estela A. Reyes
Rep. Natalie M. Higgins
Rep. Steven Owens
Rep. Danillo A. Sena
Rep. Antonio F. Cabral
Rep. James K. Hawkins
Rep. Mike Connolly
Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven
Rep. Marjorie Decker

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: H1821 (2023-2024)
H1797 (2021-2022 Livingstone)
H3358 (2019-2020 Livingstone)

SENATE BILL: S1178 (Miranda)

CURRENT LAW: Section 133A of Chapter 127 of the General Laws outlines an incarcerated persons eligibility for parole, notice and hearing requirements, parole permits, revision of terms and conditions, revocation, arrest, right to counsel and funds for experts. It specifically exempts prisoners serving a life sentence for murder in the first degree who were 18 at the time of the murder from eligibility.

Section 133C of Chapter 127 outlines the representation standards for deceased victims at parole hearings by family members and establishes offenses ineligible for parole hearings

Section 2 of Chapter 265 requires persons found guilty of murder in the first degree be ineligible for parole unless the offense was committed between their 14th and 18th birthday.

Section 24 of Chapter 279 sets the standards for terms of imprisonment for offenders including persons sentenced for life for murder between the ages of 14 and 18 years old.

Section 25 of Chapter 279 sets the standards for who is considered a habitual criminal under the law and requires such persons be sentenced for any felony to the maximum term provided by law.

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1 - Amends Section 133A of Chapter 127 by striking the types of sentences that make someone ineligible for parole. Adds language in Section 24 of Chapter 279 to allow an incarcerated person who is serving more than 1 life sentence arising out of separate and distinct incidents that occurred at different times, where the second offense occurred after the first conviction, to be eligible for parole 25 years after the start of the second or most recent sentence.

Section 2 - Amends Section 133C of Chapter 127 by striking the types of sentences that would make someone ineligible for parole.

Section 3 - Amends Section 2 of Chapter 265 to strike the reference to conditions under which an individual is ineligible for parole and replaces it with language allowing parole pursuant to Section 24 of Chapter 279 which establishes indeterminant sentences and sentences for those aged 14 to 17.

Section 4 - Amends Section 2 of Chapter 265 to make those aged 14-17 who commit first degree murder eligible for parole within 25 years of their sentence

Sections 5 and 6 - Amend Section 24 of Chapter 279 to reduce the term for those who commit first degree murder when they are between the ages of 14 and 17 from 20-30 years to 15-20 years. It also eliminates the opportunity for increased penalties. It creates a sentence of 10-12 years for this population who are adjudicated solely by a verdict of felony murder or joint venture and where the offender is not the “actual killer.” This includes offenders sentenced before and after the effective date of this Act.

Sections 7 and 8 - Amend Section 25 of Chapter 279 to allow for parole after 25 years for habitual offenders before or after the effective date of the act.

Section 9 - Requires the Department of Correction create a voluntary Restorative Justice program for those sentenced to more than 25 years.