

**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. Paul K. Frost
Rep. Todd M. Smola

HEARING DATE: June 3, 2025

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.