

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY**

BILL NO. H2031

TITLE: An Act relative to domestic violence reports and confidentiality

SPONSOR: Rep. Andres X. Vargas

COSPONSOR(S): Sen. Jason M. Lewis Sen. John Velis
Rep. Samantha Montaña Rep. Danillo Sena
Rep. Mindy Domb Rep. Leigh Davis
Rep. Natalie Higgins

HEARING DATE: June 17, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: None

SENATE BILL: S1281 (Velis)

CURRENT LAW: Section 97D of Chapter 41 makes all reports and communications between law enforcement and victims of rape and sexual assault and of domestic abuse unavailable to the public and requires police departments to maintain these documents in a manner that will ensure their confidentiality. Exceptions are made for the victim and their attorney, prosecutors, victim-witness advocates and counselors. A violation of the section is punished by up to 1 year in a house of correction or not more a \$1,000 fine, or both.

BILL SUMMARY: Section 1 – Adds a new Section 97D ½ to Chapter 41 establishing a task force to complete a systematic review of the laws pertaining to domestic violence and sexual assault reports and confidentiality. The task force consists of: (i) the Attorney General or a designee; (ii) the President of the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association or a designee; (iii) the Colonel of the State Police or a designee; (iv) the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance or a designee; (v) 2 members appointed by the Senate President, 1 who represents domestic or sexual violence programs or have experience in the area or is a survivor; (vi) 2 members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 1 who represents domestic or sexual violence programs or have experience in the area or is a survivor; (vii) 1 member appointed by the Minority leader of the House; (viii) 1 member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; and (ix) 2 persons appointed by the Governor, 1 who represents domestic or sexual violence programs

or have experience in the area or is a survivor. The task force members will appoint a chair.

The task force will assess the adequacy of laws on domestic violence, sexual assault and confidentiality including Section 97D of Chapter 41, review the impact of Section 97D and develop recommendation to ensure confidentiality without protecting perpetrators. It will submit a report of findings and recommendations to the clerks of the House and Senate and Chairs of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary within 18 months of the effective date of the Act.