

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
BILL SUMMARY**

BILL NO. H2037

TITLE: An Act relative to domestic abuse protection, "Katherine's Law".

SPONSOR: Rep. Marcus S. Vaughn

COSPONSOR(S): None

HEARING DATE: June 17, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: None

SENATE BILL: None

CURRENT LAW: Section 19 of Chapter 62C of the General Laws permits granting a reasonable extension for filing a tax return as required by Chapter 62C.

Section 51A of Chapter 119 requires that mandated reporters report situations when they have reasonable cause to believe one or more of the following: (i) abuse which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse, (ii) neglect, including and/or (iii) physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth. Violations of this section may result in fines or, if serious bodily injury or death of a child results or there are multiple violations, incarceration.

Section 2 of Chapter 175M makes family leave available for any of the following reasons: (i) to bond with the covered individual's child during the first 12 months after the child's birth or the first 12 months after the placement of the child for adoption or foster care with the covered individual, (ii) because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a family member is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces or (iii) in order to care for a family member who is a covered servicemember. Medical leave is made available for anyone with a serious health condition that makes them unable to perform the functions of their position.

Section 3 of Chapter 209A provides for the following court ordered remedies to a person suffering from abuse: (i) ordering the defendant to refrain from abusing the plaintiff, (ii) ordering the defendant to refrain from contacting the plaintiff, (iii) ordering the defendant to

vacate forthwith and remain away from the household, multiple family dwelling, and workplace and/or (iv) awarding the plaintiff temporary custody of a minor child.

Section 12 of Chapter 210 establishes probate court jurisdiction to hear petitions for name changes and requires they be granted unless the change would be against the public interest.

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1 – Adds to Section 19 of Chapter 62C an extension for filing if within the 12 months preceding the filing deadline a court, law enforcement officer or agency or the department of children and families determines that the person or their minor child has suffered abuse.

Section 2 – Adds a section to Chapter 118E requiring MassHealth coverage for a period of up to 12 months to a person and any minor children in the person's custody if a court, law enforcement officer or agency or the department of children and families determines that the person or their minor child has suffered abuse.

Section 3 – Adds a requirement to Section 51A of Chapter 119 of training for the executive office of health and human services, in consultation with the department and the office of the child advocate, to develop an evidenced-based training curriculum and program for mandated reporters.

Sections 4 and 5 – Add to Section 2 of Chapter 175M the ability for people to take family leave in order to care for themselves or their minor child following a determination by a court, law enforcement officer or agency or the department of children and families that the individual or their minor child has suffered abuse.

Section 6 – Adds a requirement that family court not place a child in the sole or shared custody of someone who by a preponderance of the evidence standard has been determined to be abusing the child.

Section 7 – Adds to Section 12 of Chapter 210 a requirement that probate court consider a name change consistent with public interest if a court or the department of children and families has determined child has suffered abuse.