



PLS Priorities: 2019-2020 legislative session

The following bills are aimed at reducing harm within the prison and jail system, increasing and promoting rehabilitation and public safety, and lowering recidivism.

Visitation: S.1379/H.2047 (Sen. Chang-Diaz and Rep. Decker) - An Act to strengthen inmate visitation would enhance public safety, reduce recidivism, and promote rehabilitation by **ensuring that visitation is not unreasonably restricted** and by facilitating the maintenance and growth of positive bonds between prisoners, their loved ones, and community supporters.

Use of Force: S.1362/H.2087 (Sen. Barrett and Rep. Keefe) & H.2114 (Rep. Nguyen & Rep. Keefe) - An Act to create uniform standards in use of force, increase transparency, and reduce harm (S. 1362/H. 2087) would enhance prisoner and officer safety by creating baseline standards for use of force in order to minimize unnecessary and excessive force against incarcerated persons and increase transparency in the use of force. **An Act to reduce harm by creating baseline standards for use of force by K9s in correctional facilities (H. 2114)** establishes minimum standards for use of law enforcement K9s (dogs) in correctional settings.

Telephone Call Rates: S.1372 (Sen. Brownsberger) & S.1430/H.3452 (Sen. Montigny and Rep. Tyler) - These two bills would **end outrageously high prison phone call rates**. **An Act relative to inmate telephone calls (S.1372)** would require that prison and jail phone calls be provided free of charge. **An Act relative to telephone service for inmates in all correctional and other penal institutions in the Commonwealth (H.3452)** and **An Act relative to inmate telephone call rates (S.1430)** would require that prisons negotiate for the lowest price to consumers and end kickbacks that inflate rates.

Parole: S.1390/H.3457 (Sen. Creem and Rep. Vargas & Rep. Miranda), **An Act relative to parole** will improve the efficiency and professional composition of the parole board, establish evidence based guidelines and a risk/needs assessment tool, account for the rights and needs of persons with certain disabilities, improve transparency, and reduce the amount of time prisoners must wait between parole reviews. **An Act establishing presumptive parole (H.1541, Rep. Dave Rogers)** will require prisoners to be granted parole at their parole eligibility date unless the parole board determines that the prisoner would violate the law if released under appropriate conditions and community supervision.

Life Without Parole: PLS is prioritizing the passage of S.826/H.3358 (Sen. Boncore and Rep. Livingstone), **An Act to reduce mass. incarceration**, which allows all people serving life sentences the opportunity for a parole hearing after serving 25 years, and applies retroactively. There is another bill, **An act repealing mandatory life without parole, S.857/H.1542 (Sen. Brownsberger and Rep. Rogers)**; this bill is a step in the right direction, but is not retroactive and only bans mandatory life without parole, allowing judicial discretion to either sentence someone to life without parole, or permit someone to see the parole board after 35 years.

Substance Use Disorder Treatment: S.1391 and H.2127 (Sen. Creem and Rep. Santiago) & S.1425 and H.1746 (Sen. Jehlen and Rep. O'Day) - Two important bills would help to address substance use in correctional facilities. **An Act relative to education and programming for the incarcerated (S.1391/H.2127)** will reduce relapse triggers and improve prisoner conduct by increasing out of cell time and opportunities for prisoners to participate in institutional programs and education including substance use programming. **An Act establishing a commission to review substance use in correctional facilities (S.1425/H.1746)** will establish a committee that will collect and review data about substance use in Massachusetts correctional institutions, jails and houses of correction.

Civil Commitment for Addiction Treatment: S.1145 and H.1700 (Sen. Friedman and Rep. Balser) - **An Act ensuring access to addiction services** would change M.G.L. c. 123 § 35, so that people can no longer be sent to prison, without being charged with or convicted of any crime, for involuntary treatment for alcohol and substance use disorders.

LGBTQI persons in Solitary Confinement: S.905 and H.1341 (Sen. Cyr and Rep. Balser) - **An Act to collect data on LGBTQI prisoners held in restrictive housing** would require state and county correctional facilities to collect data on voluntarily disclosed sexual orientation and gender identity of prisoners placed in restrictive housing, also known as solitary confinement. This will help monitor and enforce LGBTQI restrictive housing exclusions contained in the Criminal Justice Reform Act.

Prisoners' Legal Services further supports the following legislation:

- HD1125 - *An Act ensuring access to addiction services*
- HD2727/S1477 - *An Act relative to treatment, not imprisonment*
- HD1044 - *An Act to improve public safety by facilitating access to addiction services*
- HD1050 - *An Act transferring Bridgewater State Hospital from the Department of Correction to the Department of Mental Health*
- HD1046 - *An Act relative to ensuring quality mental health services in state correctional facilities*
- SD690/HD3636 - *An Act reducing recidivism and promoting family relationships during incarceration*
- SD94/HD 1228 - *An Act to prevent the imposition of mandatory minimums based on juvenile adjudications*
- SD1178/HD1096 - *An Act relative to community corrections: increasing access to reentry programs*
- SD1908/HD3449 - *An Act relative to expungement/ An Act relative to expungement, sealing and criminal record provisions*
- SD1722/SD382 - *An Act to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences related to drug offenses*
- SD1727 - *An Act relative to probation violations*
- H3637 - *An Act promoting family stability by further reforming criminal offender record information, increasing access to employment and preventing unfair accrual of debt*
- HD3635 - *An Act providing easier and greater access to record sealing*
- SD 25 and SD 26 - *Proposal for a legislative amendment to the Constitution relative to voting rights and An Act Relative to Voting Rights*

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