

Justice Reinvestment



Senate Bill 64

House Bill 1429

An Act to Increase Neighborhood Safety and Opportunity

Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz (D-Boston) and Rep. Mary Keefe (D-Worcester) and 55 co-sponsoring legislators have filed an omnibus bill backed by a large coalition of community, religious, and union organizations to improve Massachusetts' systems of criminal justice, end mass incarceration, and re-invest in our communities through job and educational opportunity. Included in the bill are:

I. Criminal Justice Reforms

- **Repeal Mandatory Minimum Drug Sentences** – This would restore judicial discretion in sentencing for drug charges, reducing the risk of longer than warranted prison terms;
- **Reduce Certain Low-Level Felonies to Misdemeanors** – Under this scenario certain offenses (such as shoplifting or other petty theft, or low-level drug charges) would be made misdemeanors, with different sanctions that rely less on long and expensive terms of incarceration;
- **End Collateral Sanctions at the RMV** – This would eliminate the current law requiring the Registry of Motor Vehicles to confiscate the license of any person convicted of any drug offense (even where charges are unrelated to the operation of a vehicle) for up to 5 years and charge at least \$500 to reinstate it; and
- **Extraordinary Medical Placement** – This would allow a judge to decide whether a person who is permanently incapacitated or terminally ill should be transferred out of prison for treatment, remaining under state custody.

II. Jobs and Schools The final sections of the bill establish a Trust fund with the cost savings from these improvements in the criminal justice system. Trust funds will be used to right our unbalanced economy by investing in evidence-based practices including job development efforts for youth, veterans, victims of violence, and other people with significant barriers to employment, and supporting programs that help at-risk youth to stay in school. Programs supported by the Trust will include:

- **Job training programs** to address the skills gaps identified by Massachusetts industry leaders;
- **Transitional job and pre-apprenticeship programs** to prepare people for today's workforce and place them in good, living-wage jobs;
- **Youth jobs** that provide both sustenance and experience;
- Initiatives to **create new jobs** through **social enterprises, coops**, and other businesses; and
- Evidence-based programs that specialize in **drop-out prevention and recovery**, giving youth a second chance at academic achievement and setting them on a path to success.

NOTE: Legislators are also filing many of the above sections as separate, individual bills: Mandatory minimums: Sen. Creem and Rep. Swan; Extraordinary Medical Placement: Sen. Jehlen and Rep. Toomey; RMV Collateral Sanctions: Sen. Chandler and Rep. Malia.

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Justice Reinvestment Act Co-sponsors

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