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Why criminal justice reform is a legislative focus for the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts this year [https://lwvma.org/addressing-income-inequality/#Why is Criminal Justice reform a legislative focus in 201718](https://lwvma.org/addressing-income-inequality/#Why_is_Criminal_Justice_reform_a_legislative_focus_in_201718)  
Reading list for beginners as well as useful links to data and reports for those who want to delve deep: <https://lwvma.org/criminal-justice-reform-reading-list/>  
Introduction to the state of criminal justice reform in Massachusetts: <https://youtu.be/5d4eHruZav4>

The League of Women Voters supports comprehensive criminal justice reform that decreases the numbers of people in custody or under state control. We would like to see individuals get the support they need when they commit offenses, such as treatment for addictions, assistance for mental health issues, and training for behavioral issues to reduce reoffending. We want to make sure that impoverished individuals aren't adversely impacted, solely because of their poverty, or that collateral consequences don't derail the ability of those no longer in custody from remaining out of custody. We encourage giving people second chances, and making sure that when they are under state control they are treated humanely. We would also like to see those in custody given incentives to rehabilitate so they can reenter society better than when they left. We also want to limit the burden of incarceration on children, families and communities. With this in mind we are supporting the following bills.

1. **“An Act implementing the joint recommendations of the Massachusetts criminal justice review” Gov. Charles Baker (HB74)** This bill should help reduce recidivism by increasing incentives to take part in rehabilitative programming, allows for work release or release to parole for some mandatory minimum sentences, provides for non-discretionary parole for state prisoners, expands programming at Community Corrections Centers and allows availability for some pre-trial individuals, allows for earning time off of parole or probation by earning compliance credits, and provides for data collection to see effectiveness of programming for reducing pretrial incarceration. New bill 2017. (\$3.5 million currently in Governor's budget for first year funding) In Joint Committee on Judiciary.

This bill offers incentives to reduce sentences by up to 35% for participation in rehabilitative programming. It also enhances support systems so people can be successful. Nearly 2/3 of individuals entering custody are reoffenders<sup>1</sup> so this bill is focused on decreasing recidivism. This bill is a response to the Council of State Government study<sup>2</sup> of the Massachusetts criminal justice system funded by Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice. The working group and steering committee include stakeholders from all three government branches so there is strong institutional support for this bill.

Not only will this bill have a positive impact on some incarcerated individuals (and those held pre-trial or released post-conviction), it will also have a positive impact on their families and communities. Certain communities have higher concentrations of repeat offenders and bear disproportionate costs, so this bill will be of most benefit to these communities, which also often have fewer resources, or connections to economic opportunity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://massinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Reentry-Policy-Brief.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/JR-in-Massachusetts-Policy-Framework1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://massinc.org/research/the-geography-of-incarceration/>

2. **“An Act to reduce the criminalization of poverty” Sen. Brownsberger, Rep. Tyler (SB777, HB2359)** (40 cosponsors Sen) This bill addresses fines, fees and court costs that impinge on an individual’s ability to meet their or their families needs. It addresses expunging records of individuals for some offenses committed if they were falsely accused. It also defines a felony to be a serious crime so that we can have better outcomes for individuals committing minor offenses. It also restricts CORI records to post-arraignment; limits the release of sealed juvenile data; enables police diversion for minor infractions; provides for sealing of certain records by all entities having them; provides for expungement and erasing of records for those not guilty of an offense for all entities having those records; eliminates license suspensions or fees for non-driving offenses as an additional penalty; and reduces legislative hurdles where minor or long-past offenses prevent individuals from obtaining a job or housing. New 2017. In Joint Committee on Judiciary.

The Massachusetts Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee, [Fine Time Massachusetts: Judges, Poor People, and Debtors’ Prison in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)<sup>1</sup>, reviewed all cases from 2015 in three counties. They found 105 cases that resulted in fine time, people doing time for nonpayment of fines and fees. None of these cases went to trial, and in only 4 cases did the person end up serving jail time for their offense, but all 105 served time for failure to pay fines or fees. In 38 cases, the defendant owed more than \$500. In only 6 cases, the defendant paid off the bill within one day of incarceration, so in most cases, this is solely due to inability to pay.

At least 41 state constitutions ban debtors’ prisons, although Massachusetts is not one of them.<sup>2</sup> If the fine time portions of this bill are implemented we should see judges inquire into the ability of a defendant to pay their fines or fees; alternatives to incarceration being offered; provision of counsel; and advance notice of incarceration risk.

The bill will also increase the felony larceny thresholds under various statutes, increasing the lowest level from \$250 (which is the lowest in the nation) to \$1500 (although TX, WI

have levels at \$2500, which would be preferable<sup>3</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> <http://senatormikebarrett.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Fine-Time-the-Report-Nov.-7-2016..pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://harvardlawreview.org/2016/02/state-bans-on-debtors-prisons-and-criminal-justice-debt-appendix/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2016/02/the-effects-of-changing-state-theft-penalties>

3. **“An Act relative to larceny” Sen. Jehlen, Rep. Chynah Tyler (SB873, HB967)** (21 Senate bill cosponsors, 33 House cosponsors) This bill redefines felony to be a serious crime by increasing the monetary limits involved. Continues from 2015/16 In Joint Committee on Judiciary

The bill will increase the felony larceny thresholds under various statutes, increasing the lowest level from \$250 (which is the lowest in the nation) to \$1500 (although TX, WI have levels at \$2500, which would be preferable<sup>1</sup>).

Currently in Massachusetts a crime against property valued at or above \$250 dollars constitutes a felony and can result in up to five years imprisonment in the state prison. This dollar amount has not been changed for decades, with the result that punishments now far exceed the nature of the crime. This current baseline is less than the cost of the average cell phone most of us carry. Further, it is less by a factor of 5 than the first cutoff in small claims court filings, which now goes up to \$7,000.

This bill would remove what would now be considered petty theft from the category of a felony and returns it to being a misdemeanor. It would be even better if it were indexed to inflation levels.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2016/02/the-effects-of-changing-state-theft-penalties>

4. **“An Act relative to sealing of juvenile records and expungement of court records” Sen. Karen Spilka, Rep. Kay Khan (SB944, HB2309)** (31 cosponsors Sen bill) Continues from 2015/16 In Joint Committee on Judiciary

This bill allows for sealing of juvenile records after one year of a clean record (instead of current 3) followed by expungement, or erasure after 3 more years giving a person a clean slate (ignoring minor motor vehicle infractions); will notify juveniles of their right to seek sealing and if case is dismissed, sealing will be automatic unless requested not to seal by all agencies holding records. Records will be sealed and expunged from all agencies including the department of youth services, police records, probation records, state police and FBI. Data release from sealed records will be limited.

In addition if a person is falsely accused or innocent, then their records may be expunged from relevant databases automatically. So applicants may write “no record” on applications asking about prior arrests.

States where there are minimal administrative barriers to sealing and/or expungement

of juvenile records have significantly reduced re-arrest/recidivism rates and increased college graduation and incomes as young people transition to adulthood.<sup>1</sup> In practice, sealing a record is difficult according to the Massachusetts Bar Association and records are almost never expunged, or erased.<sup>2</sup> Various states deal with sealing and expungement in different ways.<sup>3</sup> Society benefits from expunged records by making it easier for individuals to find work and pay taxes.<sup>4</sup>

The development of the adolescent brain doesn't reach maturity until the early 20's.<sup>5</sup> Crime rates and abuse of alcohol are highest for young males ages 15 to 19 showing that they are most susceptible to making bad decisions, including criminal behavior, during this time of their development.

<sup>1</sup> <http://econ.msu.edu/seminars/docs/Expungement%20112014.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.massbar.org/publications/lawyers-journal/2015/june/nobody%E2%80%99s-perfect-the-need-for-new-expungement-law>

<sup>3</sup> <http://ccresourcecenter.org/resources-2/restoration-of-rights/50-state-comparisonjudicial-expungement-sealing-and-set-aside/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2014/march/criminal-record-study-032014.html>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/index.shtml?utm\\_source=LifeSiteNews.com+Daily+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=2c0fa9560b-LifeSiteNews\\_com Intl Full Text 12 18 2012](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/index.shtml?utm_source=LifeSiteNews.com+Daily+Newsletter&utm_campaign=2c0fa9560b-LifeSiteNews_com Intl Full Text 12 18 2012)

And see CfJJ fact sheet for this bill: <http://www.cfjj.org/pdf/FACTSHEET-Expungement2017.pdf>

5. **Medical Release. "An Act relative to medical placement of terminal and incapacitated inmates" Sen. Pat Jehlen SB874** This bill addresses removing terminally ill or incapacitated inmates from custody so they can get the treatment they need at lower cost to the state. These individuals will be low risk for re-offending due to their illness. (20 cosponsors) New 2017. In Joint Judiciary. This bill passed the Senate in 2015/16 (S.2433)<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, this bill would allow individuals in custody who are in need of medical care during their time in custody, to request a medical parole plan to receive needed treatment and access to health insurance when they are terminally ill or otherwise medically incapacitated, along with an assessment to determine risk to society for violence or recidivism. The parole board will determine their decision within 45 days by writing. If the release is granted, the individual will remain under the supervision of the parole board until such time as the sentence would have expired. If the conditional release is denied, the sheriff will submit a statement in writing, which can be appealed within 30 days. If the parole board denies a request there are mechanisms for review with rapid turnaround as this is a medical issue. Data concerning individuals on conditional medical release will be collected and filed annually, along with statistics about denials. Alternatively, the House bills suggest placing individuals under judicial review to make this decision, or other similar mechanisms but all call for some way to

release individuals with terminal or incapacitating illnesses.

Last November, former House speaker Sal DiMasi was given medical release from federal prison, which encouraged discussion in the Commonwealth, of compassionate release for other inmates.<sup>2</sup> At least 30 states allow for comprehensive medical release and nearly all have a procedure to release dying individuals to alternative locations, such as nursing homes, or hospice care. Prisons are not set up to care for severely ill individuals.

As the state spends \$100 million a year in health care for inmates, millions of dollars in lower costs should be realized by implementing compassionate release.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/10/19/program-that-could-benefit-dimasi-has-stalled-state-level/EmrtdbksrMS9jQ9jL7qycM/story.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/11/17/judge-approves-early-release-for-dimasi/NJkkU9VgvoawEhXPDTgFLP/story.html>

See fact sheet: <http://www.plsma.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Medical-Placement-Fact-Sheet-1.30.2017-final.pdf>

**6. Pretrial and bail reform “An Act reforming pretrial process” Sen. Donnelly SB834, Rep. Rogers HD3075) (34 cosponsors Sen) Continues from 2015/16 In Joint Committee on Judiciary**

This bill provides for the formation of a Pretrial Services Agency to develop a validated risk assessment tool to determine likelihood of an individual to appear for trial; data collection and analysis of bail data using National Institute of Corrections methods; mandatory training in use of the risk assessment tool; and expanding the Office of Community Corrections so non-violent pre-trial individuals could be sent to programming instead of cash bail (especially useful for individuals in need of support services including substance abuse treatment or housing assistance).

Risk assessment tools assist judges in making informed decisions about release options while protecting judicial discretion. They also determine an individual’s resources to prevent custody for inability to pay. They include a mechanism for review if an individual is denied release.

There are concerns about how the risk assessment tool is to be developed to make sure it doesn’t result in an increase of individuals held pre-trial. It is especially essential that any risk assessment tool does not promulgate racial disparities especially if it is based on historical data that is already skewed.

Massachusetts holds about ¼ of incarcerated individuals pre-trial, which means they are still “innocent until proven guilty”. A study of the Middlesex pretrial population shows this number has grown in the past 6 years and so has the average length of stay<sup>1</sup> despite a falling crime rate. Some of these people are held because they cannot afford monetary bail, fines, and fees.<sup>2</sup> It is essential to keep dangerous people off the streets, but it is also

essential for the rest to keep their liberty while awaiting trial. The purpose of bail is to make sure that people show up for trial. Most individuals do turn up for their trials, especially if they are given reminders (like phone calls or postcards) or if they are provided the support they need to take care of any issues they may have.

Our current system has two-tiers: indigent people are held pretrial and those with means are released. This a drain on the resources of the Commonwealth, and is costly for the people held in jail who cannot go to work or school, take care of their families, pay their bills, attend job training, go to substance abuse or mental health programs, and thus may end up losing their jobs, their housing or even custody of their children.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.middlesexsheriff.org/Press%20Releases/May15/NIC%20-%20MSO%20Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://senatormikebarrett.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Fine-Time-the-Report-Nov.-7-2016..pdf>

- 7. Restorative Justice “An Act promoting restorative justice practices.” Rep. Garballey HB793 and Sen. Eldridge SB847** Enables law enforcement and court personnel to refer some cases for voluntary community based restorative justice programs to lessen penalties. Creates an advisory committee to study the use and referral and sets criteria. Provides technical support for these programs in the Commonwealth. (16 cosponsors Sen, 53 cosponsors House bill) Continues from 2015/16 In Joint Committee on Judiciary

Massachusetts already has dozens of restorative justice programs in effect in schools and communities, with referrals from police, the courts and at point of re-entry. Restorative justice has higher satisfaction rates for victims, reduces recidivism, allows for more options for police and court personnel in response to crime, and allows for meaningful roles for affected community members. There are more than 300 programs in 29 states.

Packet of information from C4RJ in support of this bill:

<http://www.c4rj.com/documents/H1313PublicHearingresources.pdf>

- 8. Primary Caretakers “An Act providing community-based sentencing alternatives for primary caretakers of dependent children who have been convicted of non-violent crimes” SB770 Sen. Brownsberger/HD3613 Rep. Holmes** Enables judges to take primary caretaker status into account when sentencing for non-violent crimes. It also provides a mechanism for a parent to request such consideration after judgement. Non-custodial sentences must be considered if available, emphasizing community rehabilitation, parent-child unity and support, drug and alcohol treatment, domestic violence education and prevention, physical and sexual abuse counseling, job training and placement, and more. The court may later evaluate the individual’s progress or violation of the conditions of the sentence and modify the sentence. (13 cosponsors Sen) New 2017 In Joint Com. On Judiciary

65% of women in prison are mothers, most living with their children at time of conviction. 53% of women in Massachusetts correctional facilities were convicted of non-violent offenses. The vast majority of women are serving sentences of less than three years. In some neighborhoods in Boston, nearly every street has residents behind bars.<sup>1</sup> This high rate of incarceration affects not only the individuals, but also their children<sup>2</sup>, their families, the neighborhood and the city as a whole.

1 in 14 children in the U.S. have had a parent in state or federal custody<sup>3</sup>, and the trauma of having a parent in custody is similar to that of being abused or domestic violence. In Massachusetts there were 69,000 children who had a parent in custody in 2011. Prisons and jails are not set up to be a good environment for children. And this problem weighs more heavily on minority communities of color<sup>4</sup>. Parental incarceration is associated with more emotional difficulties, lower school engagement, and more problems in school, and less parental monitoring for the children of parents in custody<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <http://massinc.org/research/the-geography-of-incarceration/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/05/24/having-a-parent-behind-bars-costs-children-states>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.aecf.org/resources/a-shared-sentence/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs\\_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf?la=en](http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf?la=en)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2015-42ParentsBehindBars.pdf>

Some national stats with state breakouts: <http://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Incarcerated-Women-and-Girls.pdf>

9. **Segregation/solitary bill. “An Act reducing recidivism, curbing unnecessary spending, and ensuring appropriate use of segregation” Sen. Eldridge SB1306/Rep. Holmes HD3460** (18 cosponsors Sen) This bill prohibits transfer of an inmate from the general population to a segregated unit unless they pose a threat to the safety of others or to the operation of the facility. Segregation should be for the briefest term and under the least restrictive conditions practicable and consistent with the rationale for placement. This bill requires a hearing and written decision after 5 days (with some provision for extension) and provides a conditional release date and preconditions for that release. It also requires at least 1 hour outside the cell every day; visitation rights; adequate sanitary facilities; furnished cell; adequate clothing; regular meals and periodic medical and psychiatric examinations. Individuals in non-disciplinary segregation should be provided similar living conditions to those in the general population, including 2 hours recreation out of cell every day; allowed canteen access; retain property; have disability accommodations; access to daily showers; access to education and rehab programs; radio or television; ability to earn good time credits; and more. This bill limits who may be placed in segregation such as if they have serious mental illness or other health issues such as pregnancy, postpartum, visually impaired, are under 21, are over 65, are solely sent to segregation because they are LGBTI. There are limits on the length of time held in

segregation and for daily oversight by mental health personnel among other restrictions and conditions. A plan will be provided so the individual can work themselves out of segregation with a limit of 90 days (with few exceptions). Anyone nearing re-entry shall not be put in segregation unless essential for safety to enable access to re-entry programming. This bill also restricts the use of segregation in jails and houses of correction. Data on oversight and segregation will be collected and reported out to the public annually. The goal will be to reduce the use of segregation, only as a tool of last resort. Continues from 2015/16 In Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security (JPSF)

In Massachusetts, everyday, prisoners are held in solitary confinement even if they are mentally ill, pregnant, underage, deaf or blind or are in protective custody. We need to establish minimum humane standards for sending people to solitary lockup and not allow long-term solitary to be used as an enforcement measure. There is no need to segregate vulnerable prisoners without human contact for periods longer than 10 or 15 days maximum for disciplinary infractions. And diminish segregation for violent prisoners by assessing dangerousness and having a plan for reentry into the general prison population if the individual can meet specified behavioral targets and have periodic reviews to evaluate the prisoner's progress. And establish a maximum limit of 90 days in solitary confinement.

[White Paper from PLSMA: http://www.plsma.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/PUBLIC\\_Solitary-Confinement-The-Case-for-Change-in-MA\\_Nov.-2016.pdf](http://www.plsma.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/PUBLIC_Solitary-Confinement-The-Case-for-Change-in-MA_Nov.-2016.pdf)

**10. Eliminating Mandatory Minimums. “An Act to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences related to drug offenses” Sen. Creem SB819 (31 cosponsors)/Rep. Carvalho HB741 (46 cosponsors) (71 diff reps/sens)** Eliminates mandatory minimum sentences and minimum fines for certain drug offenses. It also enables those serving such sentences to be eligible for parole, to participate in programming and to be eligible for time off for good conduct. Continues from 2015/16 In Joint Committee on Judiciary

From the state's own prison data, we learn that as of January of 2015, 95% of males incarcerated were serving a sentence longer than 3 years, yet only 69% had committed a violent offense. Further, the Department of Corrections projects a decrease of only 0.1 % annually in the prison population from 2015 to 2022.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the fact that people of color (black and Latino combined) represent roughly only 16% of the total population, i.e. about 1:6 black and Latinos to whites, the incarceration ratio is 8.1:1 blacks to whites and 6.1:1 for Latinos to whites.<sup>2</sup> In addition, people of color comprise on average 77% of drug offenders sentenced to mandatory minimums, despite the fact that all races use drugs at roughly equal levels. A minor drug offense can result in the denial of federal and state public housing, federal and state student loans. A felony conviction can be found by any computer literate employer and be used as a reason not to hire, which also

discourages offenders from participating in training programs.<sup>3</sup>

A 2014 public opinion poll conducted in Massachusetts spanning all party, race and age demographics, found that support for mandatory minimum sentences for any crime has fallen to 11%. Nearly two thirds see illegal drug use as a health issue, not a criminal issue.<sup>4</sup> And the latest report from the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission supports repeal of most if not all mandatory minimums except in the case of murder.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/doc/research-reports/pop-trends/prisonpoptrends-2014-05042015-final.pdf> pg 22

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sentencingproject.org/map/map.cfm#map>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mpp.org/assets/pdfs/library/The-Collateral-Sanctions-Associated-with-Marijuana-Offenses>

<sup>4</sup> <https://massincpolling.com/tag/mandatory-minimums/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://commonwealthmagazine.org/criminal-justice/sentencing-commission-backs-repeal-of-mandatory-minimums/>

**11. Parole bill. “An Act related to parole” Sen. Brownsberger SB779/HD3151 Rep. Dave Rogers, (7 cosponsors Sen)** This bill increases prisoner participation in work, education, vocational training and/or social skills programs with the goal of rehabilitating the individual and decreasing recidivism. Expands parole board to 9 with qualifications to include at least 3 with expertise with psychiatry, psychology, social work, or the treatment of substance use disorder. It also calls for the use of evidence-based guidelines for release and collecting data so the public can have oversight of the process. New 2017 In Joint Judiciary

Although 97% of all individuals in custody in Massachusetts are released, fewer are being released with supervision, as they are not being granted parole.<sup>1</sup> Many of these individuals would likely have more successful re-entry with supervision. Our current parole board is releasing few individuals (26-28%), perhaps due to concerns of recidivism. Studies have shown better re-entry results when reducing the number of years applicants must serve before a first parole hearing and shortening wait times; using risk-assessment tools, not other considerations; having open parole hearings that are fair (with data collected for improving the process); presuming an individual is ready for parole unless there are reasons showing they are not, to motivate those in custody to work for release and rehabilitation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.plsma.org/current-issues/parole-white-paper/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/39336-beyond-the-bars-of-hopelessness-how-we-can-revive-parole>

Parole White Paper by PLSMA: <http://www.plsma.org/current-issues/parole-white-paper/>

12. Best practices training for community policing. **“An Act to establish a center of excellence in community policing and behavioral health” SB1090 Sen. Ken Donnelly** (11 cosponsors) **HB2401 Rep. Liz Malia** This bill establishes a center for excellence to train public safety officers to deescalate situations involving behavioral health issues or substance abuse issues, so there are fewer arrests and thus to decrease our incarceration rate. The center will research best practices, train police officers, provide targeted assistance to municipalities, maximize referrals to treatment services, and evaluate outcomes for any programs developed by the center. It also sets up a Criminal Justice and Community Support Trust Fund whose funding supports jail diversion for those with mental illness or substance abuse issues; for training in crisis response by first responder law enforcement; and to create patient-focused community services for repeat users; and to provide grants to create a restoration center within a county. New 2017. Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Other:

Announcing support of Senate for comprehensive CJ Reform.

<http://commonwealthmagazine.org/criminal-justice/senators-outline-broad-criminal-justice-reform-agenda/>

HD1645 Medical parole of terminal inmates...Rep. Claire Cronin not yet written

**A budget line item to fund half the cost of a pilot program for restorative justice in the Department of Corrections, RSVP** This program, if funded, would provide a restorative justice pilot program in the Department of Corrections for the most violent or anti-social individuals in custody in Massachusetts. Thomas Turco, Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, has indicated he is supportive of implementing RSVP. This line item asks for \$300,000 to support half the cost of a pilot program at the DOC. The other half of the cost would be raised by grants.

Prison psychiatrist James Gilligan started a mental health program in the 1970s in Massachusetts. When they lost funding, they had to close down and he then moved to San Francisco, where he developed an intensive violence prevention program, RSVP<sup>1</sup>. The program ran for 10 years and the data shows that violence is treatable and the program reduces recidivism<sup>2</sup>. Implementing RSVP<sup>3</sup> would make the DOC safer for correctional officers, for those in custody, and for the community that those in custody return to. It would also reduce recidivism of our most violent offenders.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.takepart.com/feature/2016/09/19/violence-and-redemption-rehabilitation/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/James\\_Gilligan/publication/7915772\\_The\\_Resolve\\_to\\_Stop\\_the\\_Violence\\_Project\\_Transforming\\_an\\_in-house\\_culture\\_of\\_violence\\_through\\_a\\_jail-based\\_programme/links/0912f509c24128c10d000000.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/James_Gilligan/publication/7915772_The_Resolve_to_Stop_the_Violence_Project_Transforming_an_in-house_culture_of_violence_through_a_jail-based_programme/links/0912f509c24128c10d000000.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://communityworkswest.org/program/rsvp/>