

**MASSACHUSETTS BLACK AND LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS  
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
2019 – 2020**

**CIVIL RIGHTS**

**H3457 - An Act relative to parole**

**Sponsor(s): (Vargas, Andres / Miranda, Liz HOU)**

**Committee(s): Judiciary**

Increases Parole Board membership from 7 to 9. Requires that at least three members of the Parole Board have at least five years of experience in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, social work, or the treatment of substance use disorder and for one member to be a licensed mental health professional. Requires the Parole Board to rely on structured guidelines and a validated risk and needs assessment tool, taking into consideration the prisoner's good behavior and participation in work, education, and treatment programs.

**H3454 / S1378 - An Act relative to the collection and transmission of certain traffic and pedestrian stop data / An Act relative to traffic and pedestrian stop data**

**Sponsor(s): (Tyler, Chynah / Williams, Bud HOU) (Chang-Díaz, Sonia SEN)**

**Committee(s): Judiciary (J) / Public Safety and Homeland Security (J)**

Calls for data collection from traffic and pedestrian stops to prevent racial profiling and to improve police relations during encounters.

**H3573 / S1401 - An Act to protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents**

**Sponsor(s): (Balsler, Ruth / Miranda, Liz HOU) (Eldridge, James SEN)**

**Committee(s): Public Safety and Homeland Security (J) / Public Safety and Homeland Security (J)**

Limits local and state police collaboration with federal immigration agents, bars law enforcement and court personnel from inquiring about immigration status, and ensures due process protections.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**S863 / H2097 - An Act to prevent illegal trafficking and gun violence among youth in the Commonwealth**

**Sponsor(s): (Chang-Díaz, Sonia SEN) (Linsky, David HOU)**

**Committee(s): Judiciary (J) / Public Safety and Homeland Security (J)**

This bill limits firearm sales to no more than 15 sales or transfers to one person in the course of a year, in order to make it harder for gun traffickers to engage in bulk purchasing of guns. It also requires the microstamping of each firearm/ammunition and creates a study for the feasibility of an interstate commission to develop an interstate compact to encourage uniform procedures to combat illegal gun trafficking between states.

**H1525 - An Act relative to access to community corrections**

**Sponsor(s): (Moran, Frank HOU)**

**Committee(s): Judiciary (J)**

Establishes that those seeking re-entry services programs cannot be denied sentencing to a community corrections program based solely on a charge or conviction for a specific offense.

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**HEALTH**

**H1198 - An Act eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities in the Commonwealth**

**Sponsor(s): (Tyler, Chynah HOU)**

**Committee(s): Health Care Financing (J)**

This legislation would establish an office of health equity that shall coordinate all activities of the commonwealth to eliminate racial and ethnic health and health care disparities.

**H1182 - An Act Relative to Medicaid Coverage for Doula Services.**

**Sponsor(s): (Miranda, Liz / Sabadosa, Lindsay HOU)**

**Committee(s): Health Care Financing (J)**

This bill clarifies Doula services and language points, opts to include doula services for coverage through Medicaid (through MassHealth) for all child-bearing individuals, provided doulas have met state certifications, and establishes a state-wide registry of perinatal doulas.

**EDUCATION**

**H585 / S256 - An Act to promote student nutrition**

**Sponsor(s): (Vargas, Andres HOU) (Creem, Cynthia Stone SEN)**

**Committee(s): Education (J) / Education (J)**

Address school "meal debt shaming." Districts would have to adopt policies that do not prevent a student from receiving lunch, regardless of how much they owe in meal debt.

**S238 / H586 - An Act providing rightful opportunities and meaningful investment for successful and equitable education (PROMISE Act)**

**Sponsor(s): (Chang-Díaz, Sonia SEN) (Vega, Aaron HOU)**

**Committee(s): Education (J) / Education (J)**

Enacts into law all 5 recommendations of the FBRC and ensures a minimum level of state partnership in funding district schools (sliding scale, based on local wealth). Also ensures all low-income students are counted accurately, and that FBRC reforms targeted to low-income students are implemented at least as fast as reforms affecting higher-wealth communities.

**JOBS**

**S1807 / H2717 - An Act Relative to Equity in Public Contracting in Honor of Bruce C. Bolling**

**Sponsor(s): (Chang-Díaz, Sonia SEN) (Holmes, Russell HOU)**

**Committee(s): State Administration and Regulatory Oversight (J) / State Administration and Regulatory Oversight (J)**

Filed in the spirit of the work of the late Boston City Council president, this bill expands the reach of the equitable jobs access bill passed into law in 2012. The bill makes explicit the Commonwealth's commitment to lowering unemployment rates in distressed communities and uses both transparency and competition to help ensure projects funded by taxpayer dollars are creating local jobs and promoting workforce diversity.

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**H2792 - An Act relative to equity in public workforce**

**Sponsor(s): (Tyler, Chynah HOU)**

**Committee(s): State Administration and Regulatory Oversight (J)**

This legislation shall require the Commonwealth to ensure that the workforce on projects reflect the residents of the host community, when construction projects are located in low income communities.

**H121 - An Act relative to programs to promote self-sufficiency and decrease dependence on government provided assistance**

**Sponsor(s): (González, Carlos HOU)**

**Committee(s): Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities (J)**

This bill creates a self-employment assistance allowance to promote independence for needy families receiving transitional assistance. It provides self-employment assistance activities, which includes entrepreneurial training, business counseling, mentorship for participants, access to small business development resources, and technical assistance, approved by the department for the purpose of establishing a business and becoming self-employed.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / JUSTICE**

**H1762 - An Act to reform the distribution of unrestricted local aid**

**Sponsor(s): (Cabral, Antonio / Vargas, Andres HOU)**

**Committee(s): Municipalities and Regional Government (J)**

Establishes a commission to study the formula used (or lack thereof) for distributing funds generated by lottery revenues-- known as unrestricted local aid. The commission will come up with recommendations for establishing a more equitable formula.

**H993 - An Act relative to community reinvestment goals for banks**

**Sponsor(s): (González, Carlos HOU)**

**Committee(s): Financial Services (J)**

This bill requires banks to include community reinvestment goals in annual reports to the Commissioner of the Division of banks, which will be submitted to each city and town in the Commonwealth in a form prescribed by the Commissioner.

**H183 - An Act relative to the development of a strategy supporting micro businesses in inner city communities**

**Sponsor(s): (González, Carlos HOU)**

**Committee(s): Community Development and Small Businesses (J)**

Would create a Micro and Minority Business Strategy Committee which will act as an independent body to implement economic development strategy to increase employment in the inner cities and address micro and minority business community.

**HOUSING**

**H3456 - An Act to ensure right to counsel in eviction proceedings**

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**Sponsor(s):** (Tyler, Chynah HOU)

**Committee(s):** Judiciary (J)

This legislation would ensure indigent individuals and families have a right to counsel in housing eviction proceedings.

**H1288 - An Act relative to housing reform**

**Sponsor(s):** (Honan, Kevin / Vargas, Andres HOU)

**Committee(s):** Housing (J)

Sets a higher production goal of 427,000 new units by 2040, with at least 20% of that being affordable housing. Of that affordable housing, it creates a goal of having 10% of that affordable housing be deeply affordable (30% AMI) to low income households. It also requires multifamily zoning around public transportation in MBTA communities and abutter appeals reforms to allow judges discretion to set bonds for appeals cases. The bill lowers the voting threshold from 2/3 to a simple majority in specific cases (multi-family housing, ADU's, and open space residential development in smart growth zoning districts)-- one of the main components of the bill.

**H3300 - An act establishing a foreclosure review division of the Superior Court**

**Sponsor(s):** (González, Carlos HOU)

**Committee(s):** Judiciary (J)

Creates Foreclosure Review Division of Massachusetts Superior Court to have jurisdiction over all cases involving foreclosures of mortgages on residential property.

**H3562 - An Act enable public housing authorities to borrow against real estate equity of publicly-owned properties**

**Sponsor(s):** (Elugardo, Nika HOU)

**Committee(s):** Housing (J)

Allows public housing use the equity of the land for financing projects.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**H720 / S389 - An Act ensuring municipal participation of the widest eligible range (EMPOWER Act)**

**Sponsor(s):** (Vargas, Andres / Fernandes, Dylan HOU) (Chandler, Harriette SEN)

**Committee(s):** Election Laws (J) / Election Laws (J)

Several municipalities like Lowell have locally voted to lower the voting age for municipal elections, however it requires a home rule petition which hasn't moved in the legislature. This bill does not mandate lowering the voting age -- it allows cities and towns to make that decision on their own, without the home rule.

**H669 / S392 - An Act to increase voter registration, participation, and to help prevent recidivism**

**Sponsor(s):** (Holmes, Russell HOU) (Chang-Diaz, Sonia SEN)

**Committee(s):** Election Laws (J) / Election Laws (J)

Streamline procedures to restore the right to vote to former inmates.

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**REVENUE**

**H2529 / S1709 - An Act to promote healthy alternatives to sugary drinks**

**Sponsor(s): (Khan, Kay / Santiago, Jon HOU) (Lewis, Jason SEN)**

**Committee(s): Revenue (J) / Revenue (J)**

Imposes a tax on sugary drinks using a "tiered" system relative to the concentration of sugar per drink. A similar tax on syrups and powders is also included. The tax rate would be altered annually by the Commissioner on Revenue based on the Consumer Price Index. This tax would fund the newly created Children's Health Promotional Fund for implementation, administration, and enforcement relative to Mass in Motion, Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund, fluoridation of public water, nutritional programs, educational programs, water fountain improvement, and other evidence based methods of health improvement.

**H2654 - An Act to minimize youth vaping and support addiction prevention services**

**Sponsor(s): (Vargas, Andres HOU)**

**Committee(s): Revenue (J)**

Implements a wholesale tax on electronic smoking devices or tobacco products. Revenue will fund the Prevention Wellness Trust Fund.

**CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**H311 - An Act relative to protecting residential electric customers**

**Sponsor(s): (Moran, Frank HOU)**

**Committee(s): Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure (J)**

Protects competitive electric supply customers impacted by disproportionately high rates by establishing that no supplier, energy marketer, or energy broker shall execute a new contract for generation services with any individual residential retail customer after December 31st, 2019. The provision shall not apply to, or otherwise affect, any government body that aggregates the load of residential retail customers as part of a municipal aggregation plan.

**H1064 - An Act relative to auto insurance costs for traditionally low and moderate income communities**

**Sponsor(s): (Moran, Frank HOU)**

**Committee(s): Financial Services (J)**

Establishes a commission to study the impact of geographic location data in auto insurance rate calculation. The commissioner of insurance will evaluate premiums based on zip code and drivers with equivalent driving factors and report and make recommendations to the legislature no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**CLIMATE / ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**H2877 / S1931 - An Act Relative to Solar Power in Environmental Justice and Urban Communities**

**Sponsor(s): (Holmes, Russell HOU) (Chang-Diaz, Sonia SEN)**

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**Committee(s): Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy (J) / Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy (J)**

This bill ensures fair compensation to low-income solar providers and to community-shared solar projects with a minimum threshold of low-moderate income customers, and incentivizes projects that expand access to communities facing barriers. It also directs the Department of Energy Resources to address barriers like income, housing type, and language in their program design

**H761 - An Act relative to Environmental Justice and Toxics Reduction in the Commonwealth**

**Sponsor(s): (DuBois, Michelle / Miranda, Liz HOU)**

**Committee(s): Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (J)**

Ensures protection from pollution, access to government, supplemental environmental projects, and prevention of harm.