

**CHARLIE BAKER**  
*Governor*



**KARYN POLITO**  
*Lt. Governor*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**April 13, 2018**

CONTACT

Brendan Moss, Governor's Office

[brendan.c.moss@state.ma.us](mailto:brendan.c.moss@state.ma.us)



## **Baker-Polito Administration Signs Criminal Justice Reform Laws, Proposes Additional Reforms**

**BOSTON** – Governor Charlie Baker today signed *An Act Implementing the Joint Recommendations of the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Review* and *An Act Relative to Criminal Justice Reform*. After careful review of the comprehensive legislation and initial discussions with the Legislature, the Baker-Polito Administration will also file a separate bill today, *An Act Building on Criminal Justice Reform*, to modify certain provisions.

“These bills are a product of many years of hard work, collaboration and compromise by everyone involved — and by and large will make for a better criminal justice system,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “We are pleased to sign a number of important reforms to the criminal justice system today, including a long overdue ‘fentanyl fix’ to allow law enforcement to go after fentanyl traffickers, expanded protections against witness intimidation and increased penalties for repeat OUI offenders and corporate manslaughter, and a new mandatory minimum for assault and battery on a police officer causing serious injury. As this process continues, we look forward to future progress with the Legislature on this bill and others to best serve our Commonwealth.”

“The two pieces of legislation signed today represent bipartisan work to find common ground and reform outdated elements of our criminal justice system,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “Commonsense reforms like expanded protections for witnesses and their families and stiffened penalties for repeat OUI

offenders will make our communities safer, while workforce skills training opportunities for certain prisoners will help offenders transition to be more productive once they leave jail.”

The Criminal Justice Legislation signed into law today represents a bipartisan effort to address modifications to the criminal justice system, including important updates that will empower police officers to crack down on the opioid crisis by holding fentanyl and carfentanil traffickers more accountable.

This bill includes adjustments to several mandatory minimum sentences, increases the potential fine for corporate manslaughter, repeals certain drug sentencing floors and clarifies that juvenile arrests are not part of public police logs.

The law also contains several measures proposed by the Baker-Polito Administration, such a mandatory minimum for assault and battery on a police officer for serious bodily injury, bolstering protections for witnesses and their families, linking state drug classifications to emergency federal drug scheduling, and a "fine time" proposal to add stronger procedural protections before a person is held in custody for failure to pay a fine.

Governor Baker also signed a second piece of legislation, *An Act Implementing the Joint Recommendations of the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Review*, that was a product of efforts by the Administration, Beacon Hill Leadership and the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. This bill includes important initiatives to address the persistent problem of recidivism in Massachusetts, including enhancement to programming available in prison and jails, enhanced community supervision and expanded resources to behavioral health initiatives.

“This is a big day for Massachusetts. This comprehensive, bipartisan, landmark legislation will create a more modern, equitable and fair criminal justice system in the Commonwealth,” **said Senate President Harriette L. Chandler (D Worcester)**. “With a strong emphasis on rehabilitation, reintegration, and public safety, Massachusetts is leading the way forward to a better society and serves as a model for the rest of the nation.”

“This landmark legislation will make our criminal justice system significantly more equitable while enhancing public safety through a series of workable, real-world solutions,” **said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo**. “I am proud of the unprecedented reforms we’ve made to support our youngest and most vulnerable residents, particularly children facing adversity and individuals of all ages battling addiction. I wholeheartedly thank Chairwoman Cronin for her insight and diligence, Leader

Mariano, Chairman Sanchez, Representative Harrington and Chief Justice Ireland.”

"I thank Governor Baker, as well as all of my colleagues in the House and the Senate, for all the collaborative effort it has taken to get us to this historic milestone," **said Senator Will Brownsberger, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.** I look forward to working hard with them to realize the full potential of this legislation — to lift people up instead of locking them up."

“These are the most extensive reforms to our criminal justice system in decades,” **said Representative Claire Cronin, House Chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.** “This bipartisan piece of legislation reforms all aspects of the criminal justice system, from the time a person first makes contact with the criminal justice system through the time when a person re-enters society. It enhances public safety by being smart on crime, not soft on crime. This will have a meaningful impact and will affect thousands of people for many years to come.”

The administration and members of the Legislature have already started to discuss shared agreements on provisions in this criminal justice bill that need to be modified. To implement these changes and to add additional reforms that address serious concerns of the Administration, Governor Baker today announced the filing of a separate bill, called *An Act Building on Criminal Justice Reform*. For example, this bill includes a provision that the legislature is open to amending that will ensure that law enforcement agencies, the Department of Early Education and Care and other agencies that currently have access to sealed records maintain that access.

The Criminal Justice Bill signed into law today creates a number of new requirements for public safety agencies that will require additional funding to hire new staff and purchase equipment. Accordingly, the administration’s proposal seeks a \$15,000,000 appropriation to begin implementation of the Criminal Justice Bill in Fiscal Year 2018 and Fiscal Year 2019. While the administration continues to develop cost estimates for Fiscal Year 2019, estimates suggest the final budget will need to include as much as an additional \$40,000,000 to fully implement Criminal Justice Reform.

[Click here](#) to read the filing letter for *An Act Building on Criminal Justice Reform*.

###