

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2047**

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Marjorie C. Decker***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to strengthen inmate visitation.

PETITION OF:

| NAME:                      | DISTRICT/ADDRESS:                      |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>  | <i>25th Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Mike Connolly</i>       | <i>26th Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>  | <i>7th Middlesex</i>                   |
| <i>Denise Provost</i>      | <i>27th Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Jason M. Lewis</i>      | <i>Fifth Middlesex</i>                 |
| <i>Ruth B. Balsler</i>     | <i>12th Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Christine P. Barber</i> | <i>34th Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Joseph A. Boncore</i>   | <i>First Suffolk and Middlesex</i>     |
| <i>Gerard J. Cassidy</i>   | <i>9th Plymouth</i>                    |
| <i>Daniel R. Cullinane</i> | <i>12th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Sal N. DiDomenico</i>   | <i>Middlesex and Suffolk</i>           |
| <i>Mindy Domb</i>          | <i>3rd Hampshire</i>                   |
| <i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>  | <i>10th Plymouth</i>                   |
| <i>James B. Eldridge</i>   | <i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>         |
| <i>Nika C. Elugardo</i>    | <i>15th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Dylan A. Fernandes</i>  | <i>Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket</i> |
| <i>Sean Garballey</i>      | <i>23rd Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Denise C. Garlick</i>   | <i>13th Norfolk</i>                    |

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i> | <i>13th Middlesex</i>                 |
| <i>Carlos Gonzalez</i>          | <i>10th Hampden</i>                   |
| <i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>          | <i>14th Middlesex</i>                 |
| <i>James K. Hawkins</i>         | <i>2nd Bristol</i>                    |
| <i>Jonathan Hecht</i>           | <i>29th Middlesex</i>                 |
| <i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>       | <i>4th Worcester</i>                  |
| <i>Russell E. Holmes</i>        | <i>6th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Daniel J. Hunt</i>           | <i>13th Suffolk</i>                   |
| <i>Patricia D. Jehlen</i>       | <i>Second Middlesex</i>               |
| <i>Mary S. Keefe</i>            | <i>15th Worcester</i>                 |
| <i>Kay Khan</i>                 | <i>11th Middlesex</i>                 |
| <i>Jay D. Livingstone</i>       | <i>8th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Adrian C. Madaro</i>         | <i>1st Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>       | <i>11th Suffolk</i>                   |
| <i>Liz Miranda</i>              | <i>5th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Rebecca L. Rausch</i>        | <i>Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex</i> |
| <i>David M. Rogers</i>          | <i>24th Middlesex</i>                 |
| <i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>      | <i>1st Hampshire</i>                  |
| <i>Jon Santiago</i>             | <i>9th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>        | <i>9th Middlesex</i>                  |
| <i>Chynah Tyler</i>             | <i>7th Suffolk</i>                    |
| <i>Tommy Vitolo</i>             | <i>15th Norfolk</i>                   |

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 2047**

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By Ms. Decker of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2047) of Marjorie C. Decker and others relative to inmate visitation. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court  
(2019-2020)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act to strengthen inmate visitation.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           SECTION 1. Section 36C of chapter 127 of the General Laws, as amended by section 92  
2 of chapter 69 of the acts of 2018, is hereby amended by striking out the second sentence and  
3 inserting in place thereof the following sentences:-

4           For the purposes of this section, to unreasonably limit in-person visitation of inmates  
5 shall include, but not be limited to:

6           (a) providing an eligible inmate fewer than 2 opportunities for in-person visitation  
7 during any 7-day period;

8           (b) placing limitations on the number of unique individuals who may be eligible to visit  
9 the inmate;

10           (c) prohibiting an individual from visiting more than one inmate in the custody of the  
11 Department of Correction, or more than one inmate in the same facility, absent an individual

12 determination that such visitation would pose a threat to security or orderly running of the  
13 facility;

14 (d) requiring eligible visitors to submit more private and personal information to be pre-  
15 approved to visit than is strictly necessary for the safety and security of the institution and/or  
16 without complying with all applicable statutes, regulations, and orders governing the protection  
17 of sensitive and/or private personal information;

18 (e) limiting inmates to receiving visitors from a pre-approved list without permitting  
19 inmates to update their list upon request, or limiting inmates to receiving visitors from a pre-  
20 approved list without providing a reasonable process for the inmate to request an exception  
21 allowing for approval of visitors where visitation could not have been reasonably foreseen, and  
22 to have such requests promptly approved within 10 calendar days absent an individual  
23 determination that such visitation would pose a threat to security or orderly running of the  
24 facility;

25 (f) refusing to permit a visitor or visitors who previously visited an inmate without  
26 incident or who was on an inmate's previously approved visitor list to visit that inmate upon his  
27 or her admission or transfer to a new facility, absent a specific determination that such visitor(s)  
28 would pose a threat to security or orderly running of the facility; or requiring a new pre-approved  
29 list of authorized visitors upon an inmate's admission or transfer to a new facility without  
30 permitting at least two adult visitors and any of the inmate's minor children to visit the inmate  
31 pending authorization of the inmate's visitor applicants;

32 (g) excluding a visitor from eligibility solely on the basis of their status as formerly  
33 incarcerated;

34 (h) excluding a visitor from eligibility solely on the basis of their role, past or present, as  
35 a volunteer in a state or federal prison, jail or house of correction;

36 (i) excluding a visitor from eligibility unless there is reasonable individualized suspicion  
37 that their visitation poses a threat to institutional security, articulated in writing to the excluded  
38 person; and further without providing the excluded person the right to appeal their exclusion as  
39 well as to have their exclusion re-evaluated after no more than one year has passed;

40 (j) prohibiting an inmate from holding their minor children, or prohibiting inmates or  
41 visitors from playing with or instructing their children, or, where there is a designated children's  
42 area, prohibiting inmates or visitors from playing with or instructing their children within the  
43 confines of that area.

44 (k) prohibiting prisoners and visitors from sitting side by side or from engaging in  
45 reasonable physical contact, including but not limited to a brief handshake, hug, and/or closed-  
46 mouth kiss;

47 (l) prohibiting contact visitation wherever such visitation is feasible;

48 (m) removing contact visitation as a disciplinary measure for more than 15 days;

49 (n) implementing a dress code that is unreasonable and fails to respect a visitor's religion,  
50 race, class, culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation; "unreasonable" includes but is not  
51 limited to barring any clothing or accessory that does not pose a threat to security or the orderly  
52 running of the facility or preventing a visitor whose dress was deemed unacceptable from  
53 returning during a designated visiting period on the same day with alternate clothing;

54 (o) turning away a visitor on the basis of a dress code violation without consulting the  
55 superintendent, shift commander, or designee, provided, however, that if a visitor is turned away  
56 for a dress code violation that the specific reason must be in writing and provided to the visitor  
57 upon request;

58 (r) prohibiting inmates in restrictive housing from having access to the same visitation as  
59 prisoners in general population, provided, however, that visits may be restricted for up to 15 days  
60 for a disciplinary offense;

61 (s) failing to provide a separate confidential room for legal visits in each correctional  
62 facility;

63 (t) prohibiting daily access to visitation during all facility or hospital visiting hours  
64 should an inmate be transferred to an outside facility or hospital and be in critical condition or in  
65 imminent danger of death;

66 (u) failing to establish a policy that visitation be maximized and as free and  
67 unencumbered as possible, provided it is not inconsistent with a facility's operational and  
68 security needs.

69 SECTION 2. Section 36C of Chapter 127 of the General Laws, as amended by section  
70 92 of chapter 69 of the acts of 2018, is hereby amended by inserting this paragraph at the end: -

71 Every guard, corrections officer and employee of a correctional institution, jail or house  
72 of correction shall be required to attend a training session and receive educational information  
73 on; (1) the importance of ongoing visitation to individuals who are incarcerated as related to  
74 reducing recidivism, violence and increasing successful re-entry, and (2) the importance of

75 civility and respectful conduct toward family members and other members of the public who  
76 visit individuals who are incarcerated so as to encourage visitation on a regular basis while  
77 maintaining security. Training materials and educational information shall be developed in  
78 consultation with representatives of the Massachusetts Bar Association, the Women's Bar  
79 Association, Prisoners Legal Services, ex-prisoners community based organizations, and  
80 community based re-entry programs, and prior to implementation shall be submitted to the joint  
81 committee on the judiciary and the joint committee on public safety and homeland security.