

SENATE No. 1437

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Michael O. Moore

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 establishing the Correctional Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Michael O. Moore

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Second Worcester

SENATE No. 1437

By Mr. Moore, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1437) of Michael O. Moore for legislation to establish the Correctional Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. 1337 OF 2017-2018.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing the Correctional Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights.

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. Chapter 125 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition,
2 is hereby amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

3 Section 22. This section shall also be known as "The Correction Officers Bill of Rights".

4 (a) The following words and phrases as used in this section, unless a different meaning is
5 plainly required by the context, shall have the following meanings:

6 "Correctional officer", shall mean and refer to a sworn member of the Massachusetts
7 Department of Correction who holds one of the following titles: Correction Officer, Industrial
8 Instructor, or Recreation Officer, or a sworn officer of any county jail or house of correction
9 which includes those holding the rank of correction officer, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain.

10 “Disciplinary action”, shall mean and refer to any action that may lead to dismissal,
11 demotion, suspension, reduction in pay or benefits, written reprimand, or a transfer or
12 reassignment for purposes of punishment.

13 (b) Whenever a correctional officer is under investigation and subject to interrogation by
14 his commanding officer, or any other member of the employing agency or office, for any reason
15 which could lead to disciplinary action, such interrogation shall be conducted under the
16 following conditions:

17 The interrogation shall be conducted at a reasonable hour, preferably at a time when the
18 correctional officer is on duty, unless the seriousness of the investigation is of such a degree that
19 immediate action is required.

20 The interrogation shall take place either at the office headquarters of the investigating
21 officer or at the correctional unit in which the incident allegedly occurred, as designated by the
22 investigating officer or employing agency or office.

23 The correctional officer under investigation shall be informed prior to such interrogation
24 of the rank, name, and command of the officer in charge of the investigation, any interrogating
25 officers, and all persons present during the interrogation. All questions directed to the officer
26 under interrogation shall be asked by and through no more than one interrogator at any one time.

27 The correctional officer under investigation shall be informed of the nature of the
28 investigation prior to any interrogation, and he or she shall be informed of the name of all
29 complainants.

30 The interrogating sessions shall be for a reasonable period taking into consideration the
31 nature and complexity of the issue being investigated, and shall be timed to allow for such
32 personal necessities and rest periods as are reasonably necessary.

33 The correctional officer under interrogation shall not be subjected to offensive language
34 or be threatened with dismissal, demotion, suspension, a written reprimand, or other disciplinary
35 action, except that an officer refusing to answer questions or submit to interrogation shall be
36 informed that a failure to answer questions directly related and relevant to the investigation or
37 interrogation may result in disciplinary action. No promise or reward shall be made as an
38 inducement to answer any questions.

39 The complete interrogation of a correctional officer shall be recorded on audio tape, or
40 otherwise preserved in such a manner as to allow a transcript to be prepared, and there shall be
41 no unrecorded questions or statements. Upon the request of the interrogated officer, a copy of
42 any such recording or transcript shall be made available to the interrogated officer no later than
43 72 hours, excluding holidays and weekends, following said request. The correctional officer
44 being interrogated shall have the right to bring his or her own audio tape recording device and
45 record any and all aspects of the interrogation.

46 If prior to or during the interrogation of the correctional officer it is deemed that he or she
47 may likely be charged with a criminal offense, the correctional officer shall be completely
48 informed of all his or her constitutional rights before proceeding or continuing with the
49 interrogation.

50 At the request of any correctional officer under investigation, he or she shall have the
51 right to be represented by counsel or a collective bargaining unit representative of his or her

52 choice, who shall be present at all times during such interrogation. The representative shall not
53 be the person subject to the same investigation, and this right to representation shall not apply to
54 any normal course of duty counseling, instruction, or informal verbal admonishment by, or other
55 routine or planned contact with, a supervisor or any other correctional officer. Nothing herein
56 shall be construed to prohibit a collective bargaining unit representative from being present
57 during any interrogation unless the interrogated officer specifically requests their exclusion.

58 Upon completion of the investigation, the correctional officer shall be furnished with the
59 names of any witnesses, the charges and specifications against the officer, a copy of the
60 investigatory file and any exculpatory information, but excluding the identity of any justifiably
61 confidential sources of information, not less than 10 days prior to any disciplinary hearing.

62 (c) No evidence obtained or received in violation of any rights established by the United
63 States Constitution, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Constitution, or this section, shall be
64 admitted into evidence in any disciplinary hearing. Further, no person or tribunal shall enter any
65 judgment or sustain any disciplinary action based on any evidence obtained or received in
66 violation of the correctional officer's rights as contained in this section.

67 (d) No dismissal, demotion, suspension, transfer, reassignment, or other personnel action
68 which might result in loss of pay or benefits or which might otherwise be considered a
69 disciplinary or punitive measure shall be taken against any correctional officer unless he or she is
70 first notified of the impending action, and the rights and privileges granted by this section and
71 any applicable collective bargaining agreement have been properly afforded.

72 (e) Every correctional officer shall have the right to bring a civil action against any
73 person, group of persons, or organization or corporation, or the head of such organization or

74 corporation, for damages, either pecuniary or otherwise, suffered during the performance of the
75 officer's official duties or for abridgment of the officer's civil rights arising out of the officer's
76 performance of official duties.

77 (f) No correctional officer shall be discharged, demoted, denied promotion, suspended,
78 transferred, reassigned, or otherwise discriminated against in regard to his or her employment or
79 appointment, or be threatened with any such treatment, by reason of his or her exercise of the
80 rights and privileges granted by this section or any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

81 (g) Notwithstanding the rights and privileges provided by this section, this section does
82 not limit the right of the Department of Correction or the Office of the Sheriff of any County to
83 discipline or pursue criminal charges against a correctional officer.

84 (h) The rights and privileges established by this section shall not be diminished or
85 abridged by any applicable collective bargaining agreement.