

**SENATE . . . . . No. 981**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Cindy F. Friedman***

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*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 relative to guilty but with a mental illness.**

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*Cindy F. Friedman*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Fourth Middlesex*

**SENATE . . . . . No. 981**

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By Ms. Friedman, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 981) of Cindy F. Friedman for legislation relative to guilty but with a mental illness. The Judiciary.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 1034 OF 2021-2022.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court  
(2023-2024)**  
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An Act relative to guilty but with a mental illness.

*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 15 of chapter 123 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020  
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting before the word “Whenever”, in line 1, the  
3 following words:-

4           For the purposes of this section, “mental illness” shall mean a substantial disorder of  
5 thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory which grossly impairs judgment, behavior,  
6 capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life, but shall not include  
7 intellectual or developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury or  
8 psychiatric or behavioral disorders or symptoms due to another medical condition as provided in  
9 the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)  
10 published by the American Psychiatric Association.

11 SECTION 2. Said section 15 of said chapter 123, as so appearing, is hereby further  
12 amended by striking out subsection (f) and inserting in place thereof the following subsections:-

13 (f) After a finding of guilty on a felony criminal charge that requires imprisonment, and  
14 prior to sentencing, the court may, upon a motion by the defendant and where warranted by the  
15 evidence, order a psychiatric or other clinical examination to be completed by a qualified  
16 physician or qualified psychologist designated by the department, to determine if the defendant  
17 should receive a finding of guilty but with a mental illness. Such period of observation or  
18 examination shall not exceed 40 days. After the period of observation, the examining physician  
19 or psychologist shall provide the court a report of their findings, which shall include whether the  
20 examining physician or psychologist diagnosed the defendant with a mental illness, as defined in  
21 this section, or confirmed a previous mental illness diagnosis. If the findings do not indicate that  
22 the defendant has a diagnosed mental illness, the court shall impose the sentence. If the findings  
23 indicate that the defendant has a diagnosed mental illness, the court shall hold a hearing on the  
24 issue of the defendant's mental condition. The court shall find the defendant guilty but with a  
25 mental illness if the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant has a  
26 mental illness. If a defendant is found guilty but with a mental illness, the court shall impose the  
27 same sentence as provided by law for a defendant found guilty of the same crime; provided  
28 however, if the sentence includes a term of imprisonment, the court shall order the defendant to  
29 serve the entirety of their imprisonment at a facility, as defined in section 1, or if the defendant is  
30 a male and the court determines that a secure facility is required, the defendant shall serve the  
31 sentence at Bridgewater State Hospital. Consistent with public safety and security, the defendant  
32 shall be held in the least restrictive setting that is clinically indicated and will not create a  
33 likelihood of serious harm, as defined in section 1. Any defendant confined to Bridgewater State

34 Hospital shall be entitled to a hearing after a period of 12 months to determine if the defendant  
35 should be transferred to a facility, as defined in section 1.

36 (g) In like manner to the proceedings under paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (e) and (f) of this  
37 section, a court may order a psychiatric or psychological examination or a period of observation  
38 for an alleged delinquent in a facility to aid the court in its disposition. Such period shall not  
39 exceed 40 days.