

# Child & Family Services to Host Annual Bowl-A-Thon March 6th. at Wonder Bowl in New Bedford

Child & Family services invites you to join them for their annual charity bowling event. Monies raised will support our Caring Network program that provides free services to children between the ages of 4-14 who are victims or witness to violence.

**Date:** Sunday, March 6, 2022

**Time:** 1:00 -3:00pm

**Place:** Wonder Bowl

66 Hathaway Rd, New Bedford, MA

*This fun event is great for all ages and abilities! Teams of family, friends, and co-workers are encouraged to participate.*

## **What you get:**

2 games of bowling including shoes

Pizza and Refreshments

A chance to win one of four trophies.

A great feeling knowing that you are helping children who are victims or witness to violence.

## **What you need to know:**

Each team is made up of 4 bowlers.

Each bowler is asked to raise a minimum of \$60.

**Team captains must call** Susan Remy at 508.742.1032 **or** email [sremy@cfsservices.org](mailto:sremy@cfsservices.org) to register their teams by February 18, 2022.

All pledges are due on or before Monday, February 25, 2022.



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES



*There's not a moment to SPARE!  
EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO BE SAFE.*

**Sunday,  
03.06.22**



Join us for our annual **Bowl-a-Thon** charity bowling event. Monies raised will support our Caring Network Program. This fun event is great for all ages and abilities! Teams of family, friends, and co-workers are encouraged to participate.

## Details

### Wonder Bowl

66 Hathaway Road  
New Bedford, MA

**Time:** 1 pm- 3 pm



Each bowler is asked to raise a minimum of \$60 in pledges.

### **To Bowl or Sponsor, visit:**

<https://child-familyservices.org/upcoming-events/>

**Questions?** Contact Susan Remy at (508) 742-1032

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# Committee Keeps Lock On Popular Massachusetts Licensing Bill

By Chris Lisinski  
State House News Service

Almost two years ago to the day, the Transportation Committee voted along party lines to endorse legislation that would allow undocumented immigrants in Massachusetts to access driver's licenses.

Now, with a deadline looming to take a position on the latest version of the bill, the same panel decided it needs more time, just as it did with a long-debated proposal to expand enforcement of the state's seatbelt law.

Neither the measure that supporters dubbed the Work and Family Mobility Act (H 3456 / S 2289) nor Gov. Charlie Baker's refiled bill allowing police to stop motorists solely for failing to buckle up (H 3706) will be subject to this week's biennial culling of the bills under the Legislature's Joint Rule 10.

Both bills had been pending before the committee for more than nine months before its members sought an additional one-month extension. The licensing bill featured at a public hearing in June, while lawmakers heard testimony on Baker's road safety bill in December.

The codified-yet-malleable deadline in Joint Rule 10, which falls on the first Wednesday of February in even years, is designed to push bills forward in the process with enough time

remaining for the Legislature to tackle big topics before it transitions to holding only lightly attended informal sessions after July 31.

The House on Monday quietly adopted an extension order pushing the deadline for the Transportation Committee to produce an up-or-down report on eight bills from Feb. 2 to March 4, giving the panel – which has functioned without a Senate chair since September – another month to work.

That move frustrated supporters of the seatbelt proposal, who cautioned the extension further delays action on a potential life-saving measure at a time when roadway deaths are soaring in Massachusetts and nationally.

Among supporters of the licensing bill, who have been unsuccessfully pushing some form of the change for more than a decade, the delay was interpreted as “very good news.”

“I think we’re all in agreement at the coalition that this was very good news because we know how, with COVID especially, this has been an incredibly difficult and rushed legislative session,” said Franklin Soultis, a 32BJ SEIU spokesperson who works with the Driving Families Forward Coalition. “We had a very great hearing. It seems like communication is really good between the committees and the sponsors of the bill and everybody, so we feel very confident this is actually a really great sign.”

In February 2020, on the most recent iteration of Joint Rule 10 Day, the Transportation Committee voted 14-4 to advance a redrafted version of the bill that would authorize undocumented immigrants to apply for standard, but not REAL ID-enhanced, licenses. All four votes against the measure came from Republicans. House Co-chair Rep. William Straus of Mattapoisett and Rep. Paul Tucker of Salem, both Democrats, did not cast votes.

The measure later died without action in the Senate Ways and

Means Committee, despite public support from Senate President Karen Spilka.

House Speaker Ronald Mariano has been less vocal, though he said in March that he “recognize(s) the value in bringing all drivers under the same public safety, licensing and insurance structures.”

At a virtual event highlighting business and health care sector support for the bill, its backers noted that the latest version has the highest number of cosponsors in the history of the campaign, including majorities in the 160-member House and the 40-member Senate.

As of Tuesday, 84 representatives and 21 senators – excluding former Transportation Committee Co-chair Sen. Joe Boncore, who resigned last year – added their names in support of the bill.

The latest version differs from the version that earned the Transportation Committee’s support last session in two main ways: it has a slightly different set of identification standards required to acquire a standard license, and it would limit the state Registry of Motor Vehicles from sharing many documents involved in the applications, including with federal immigration authorities.

Laura Rotolo, staff counsel and community advocate at the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, said the latest version is “tighter” than its predecessor.

“This session, we had a lot of support and co-drafting with our law enforcement leaders,” Rotolo said. “We have worked together with them and other partners like insurers to make sure that the bill makes sense, that the bill is workable for many different stakeholders.”

Sixteen other states and Washington, D.C. already have laws on the books allowing undocumented immigrants to acquire some form of a driver’s license, according to supporters.

“Our neighbors in Connecticut enacted a similar law permitting the issuance of driver’s licenses back in 2015, and as of 2019, over 50,000 undocumented immigrants in Connecticut have taken written tests, vision tests, and road tests to obtain driver’s licenses,” said Roberta Fitzpatrick, senior vice president and CIO at Arbella Insurance. “Since that time, Connecticut has seen a reduction in hit-and-run crashes and a steep decline in the number of people found guilty of unlicensed driving.”

If legislative leaders opt to pursue the bill this session, they will likely need to line up two-thirds majorities in both chambers to overcome opposition from Gov. Charlie Baker.

The Republican governor said in February 2020 that he does not support the bill because he believes “it’s really hard to build the kind of safeguards into that kind of process that would create the kind of security that would be hard to live up to some of the federal and state standards with respect to security and identification.”

Asked if he has vocalized an opinion on the topic more recently, a Baker spokesperson replied, “Governor Baker supports existing laws in Massachusetts, enacted on a bipartisan basis, that ensure Massachusetts’ compliance with federal REAL ID requirements and enable those who demonstrate lawful presence in the United States to obtain a license.”

Baker, now in the lame-duck stretch of his final term, has been ramping up pressure on Democrat leaders to tackle some of his stalled proposals. His push to reform the state’s seatbelt law so far has failed to gather momentum.

Lawmakers have been hesitant to convert the Bay State from its current secondary enforcement system, in which police can only cite motorists for driving unbuckled if they first observe another traffic violation, to primary enforcement, in which cops could pull someone over solely for not wearing a

seatbelt.

Supporters of the change say it would help increase the Bay State's seatbelt use rate, which lags behind the 35 other states where police can enforce the restraints without requiring an additional offense.

Mary Maguire, AAA Northeast Director of Public Affairs, said 81.6 percent of Bay State drivers and passengers buckled up before the pandemic, a rate that has since dropped to 77.5 percent. At the same time, roadway deaths in Massachusetts have surged from 327 in 2020 to at least 415 in 2021, she said.

"Each one of those people is an individual who's part of a family, a school, a football team, a church, a committee. The ripple effect of that is really extraordinary," Maguire said. "We know that the drop in seatbelt use has been one of the key factors in this increase in the number of deaths in Massachusetts and across the country."

AAA Northeast also backs other primary seatbelt bills pending before different legislative committees, but Maguire said she believes it is "really important" for the Transportation Committee to send Baker's road safety bill forward into the larger legislative arena.

Mariano remains skeptical about the idea, saying via a spokesperson in the fall that he has "long been concerned about potential racial profiling with primary enforcement measures."

The Vision Zero Coalition, a group of road safety and transportation advocates, also opposes the push, arguing that converting seatbelt laws would be an ineffectual use of state resources and could wreak disproportionate harm on communities of color.

Boston Cyclists Union Executive Director Becca Wolfson, whose

group is a member of the coalition, said the Transportation Committee extending its review period on Baker's bill is "a little bit troubling."

"It means we're going to be doubling down on our communication and activating folks to reach out to the committee members to know how serious the consequences would be if we passed this," Wolfson said. "We've activated folks and have a lot of support for our opposition to this bill."

Baker's wide-ranging bill would also allow municipalities to post red-light cameras at select intersections, add penalties for driving recklessly, causing injury or causing death with a suspended license, and reform the commercial licensing process.

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## **Scituate first responders rescue 3 Massachusetts fishermen from waters of sunken scalloping vessel**

"At 1436 yesterday Scituate Public Safety Dispatch received a call from a Marshfield resident that lived near Humarock. The caller reported seeing a 40-50' fishing vessel approximately one mile off of Humarock beach. The witness stated that the boat overturned and quickly sank. This was the only call received by dispatch.

Scituate Police and Fire units were dispatched to the area. Simultaneously boats got underway from the SPD Marine Unit, Scituate Harbormaster's office, and Marshfield Harbormaster's



office.



*Scituate Police Department photo.*

With assistance from personnel on the land, the rescue boats located three men in the water approximately 1/2 mile offshore. All three men were clinging to fishing gear in a slick of diesel fuel. A 55' fishing vessel had sunk beneath them. The fishermen were not wearing life jackets or survival suits and had been in the freezing water for close to an hour.

As you can see in the video, numerous attempts were made to throw rescue rings to the fishermen while they were battling dangerous sea conditions. All three men were pulled out of the water, suffering from severe hypothermia.

All three survivors were transported to the Harbormaster's office where they were quickly offloaded and transported to the hospital.



*Scituate Police Department photo.*

More specific information will not be released pending notifications of family members.

A great team effort and a great turnout. Nice job SPD Officer Brendan Mcauley, SPD Officer Craig Keefe, Scituate Fire Dept, Fire Chief John Murphy, Harbormaster Stephen Mone, Asst Harbormasters Mike Bearce, Joe Guarino, and Harbormaster Mike Dimeo, Marshfield Detective Greg Davis.

Drone footage credit to Lieutenant Eric Norlin, SFD." - Scituate Police Department.

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**Massachusetts woman pleads  
guilty to fraudulently**

# receiving \$1.2 million in COVID-19 PUA benefits

Defendant and co-conspirator submitted 100 PUA claims in others' names resulting in more than \$1.2 million in payments.

A Springfield woman pleaded guilty yesterday in connection with her involvement in a scheme to fraudulently obtain COVID-19-related unemployment assistance.

Audri Ford-Victory, 61, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud conspiracy. U.S. District Court Judge Mark G. Mastroianni scheduled sentencing for June 1, 2022. Ford-Victory was charged on Dec. 15, 2021.

In March 2020, in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CARES Act created a temporary federal unemployment insurance program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which in Massachusetts is administered by the Department of Unemployment Assistance. This program provides unemployment insurance benefits for individuals who are not eligible for other types of unemployment benefits.

Ford-Victory and her co-conspirator submitted more than 100 fraudulent PUA claims resulting in more than \$1.2 million in payments. Approximately half of the PUA claims were made on behalf of individuals residing outside of Massachusetts. In some instances, Ford-Victory and her co-conspirator received kickback payments for doing so.

The charge of wire fraud conspiracy provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Frederick J. Regan, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Boston Field Office; and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations – Labor Racketeering and Fraud, New York Regional Office, made the announcement. The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance provided assistance in the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Markham of Rollins’ Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit is prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department’s response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice’s National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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# 50-year old Massachusetts woman sentenced for Social Security benefit theft

A Springfield woman was sentenced today for stealing over \$62,000 in Social Security benefits.

Patricia Shibles, 50, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Mark Mastroianni to three years of probation, with the first six months to be served on home detention. Shibles was also ordered to pay \$62,113 in restitution to the Social Security Administration (SSA). On September 22, 2021, Shibles pleaded guilty to one count of theft of public funds.

In April 2016, the father of Shibles' fiancé, who was receiving Social Security benefits, passed away. The SSA was not informed of the death, and SSA continued to deposit monthly benefits into a bank account held by Shibles and the deceased beneficiary. From April 2016 through April 2020, Shibles stole approximately \$62,113 in Social Security benefits from the account.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins and John Cremonini, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Boston Field Division, made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Dineen Jerrett of Rollins' Springfield Branch Office and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Burzycki of Rollins' Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case.

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# New cohort seeks to create healthier, more connected New Bedford by harnessing creativity of residents

Eight New Bedford arts and culture organizations have a resolution for 2022: use creativity to create a healthier and more connected community. Already, members of the new Creating Connection cohort have held virtual workshops to collaborate and take action.

“I think that we speak a language through the arts,” says Peter Walker of 3rd EyE Youth Empowerment, and member of the group. “All voices are welcome. We’re not just creating a space for like minds... because we have to find a way to get back to that healthy form of public discourse.”

Developed by Arts Midwest and Metropolitan Group, Creating Connection is a research and messaging initiative that helps creative organizations connect their efforts to existing community values. The program’s broad goals are to make creative expression, arts, and culture a recognized, valued, and expected part of everyday life. Late in 2021, New Bedford was selected as a host city for the program’s first place-based pilot in the state.

“New Bedford individuals and organizations have built a strong practice of constructive interaction and partnering to get creative things done,” remarks David Prentiss of the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, and another member of the cohort. “I also think we have a learning culture – learning from each other and from our own experiences.”

Organizations went through a competitive process to be among the eight finalists chosen to take part in the project. The

eight accomplished nonprofit organizations representing New Bedford in the Creating Connection cohort are 3rd EyE Youth Empowerment, Buy Black New Bedford, New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks!, DATMA (Massachusetts Design Art & Technology Institute), New Bedford Historical Society, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, Cape Verdean Association in New Bedford, and the Co-Creative Center.

Dena Haden of the Co-Creative Center believes Creating Connection within the group and with the city at large will provide the opportunity for New Bedford to move forward “allowing art to be a common thread and resource for our area and community.”

“The inspiring work of New Bedford artists and cultural trailblazers is being recognized by the Barr Foundation, and now Arts Midwest, for its ability to positively impact and transform the city,” says Margo Saulnier, strategist for New Bedford Creative, the lead partner for the project.

The Barr Foundation is funding Creating Connection as part of its investment in the city’s arts and culture sector. New Bedford Creative is funded by the city’s Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund, with additional support from Bristol County Savings Bank, Mass Cultural Council, and MassDevelopment’s “TDI Creative Cities Initiative.” It is housed at the New Bedford Economic Development Council (NBEDC).

“I think in New Bedford the arts are tangible and we have created a lot of human connection that overall creates a state of wellbeing,” said Lindsay Miś of DATMA. “For me, it reminds me of how you would interact with a family – and I always think of New Bedford as one big family – and I feel like the arts are our vehicle for human connection.”

Indeed, it is why Arts Midwest brought Creating Connection to New Bedford. They believe this city can use its creativity to create a healthier and more connected community.

New Bedford Creative will be sharing the cohort's journey throughout the year. Follow [NewBedfordCreative.org](http://NewBedfordCreative.org) for all arts and culture updates.

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*New Bedford Creative is housed at the New Bedford Economic Development Council, and tasked with implementing the city's first-ever strategic arts and culture plan, published in December 2018. The vision of the plan is that "In New Bedford, the creative community is an engaged and powerful partner, inspiring social, economic, and cultural growth. In this authentic seaport city, each and every person enjoys an opportunity to experience a diversity of cultures.*

Art is everywhere, encouraging fun, provoking thought, and nurturing the soul." Funding is provided by the New Bedford Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund, proposed by Mayor Jon Mitchell in the spring of 2016 and signed into law by Governor Baker in January 2017. The purpose of the fund is to create a dedicated revenue stream to provide for additional planning, programmatic, and administrative capacity to allow the City of New Bedford to take full advantage of its cultural and tourism assets, and to catalyze and manage the growth of the cultural and tourism sectors. The New Bedford Economic Development Council has a three-year agreement to manage the fund for the City.

This work is led by the Creative Strategist, a 24-member volunteer Creative Consortium, with staff support from the NBEDC and Departments of City Planning, Tourism & Marketing, Parks, Recreation & Beaches, and the Mayor's Office. Additional funding is provided by Barr Foundation, Bristol County Savings Bank, Mass Cultural Council, MassDevelopment/TDI, and New England Foundation for the Arts. For more information, visit [newbedfordcreative.org](http://newbedfordcreative.org).

**Barr Foundation:** The Barr Foundation's mission is to invest in



human, natural, and creative potential, serving as thoughtful stewards and catalysts. Based in Boston, Barr focuses regionally, and selectively engages nationally, working in partnership with nonprofits, foundations, the public sector, and civic and business leaders to elevate the arts, advance solutions for climate change, and connect all students to success in high school and beyond. Founded in 1997, Barr now has assets in excess of \$3 billion, and has contributed more than \$1 billion to charitable causes. For more information, visit [barrfoundation.org](http://barrfoundation.org) or follow @BarrFdn.

Arts Midwest believes that creativity has the power to inspire and unite humanity. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest supports creative organizations and communities throughout a nine-state Midwest region and nationally. One of six nonprofit United States Regional Arts Organizations, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 30 years. For more information, visit [artsmidwest.org](http://artsmidwest.org).

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## **Car engulfed, 1 dead in serious Massachusetts multiple car crash involving tractor-trailer**

“At approximately 12:05 hours earlier this afternoon, our members assigned to the State Police-Foxboro Barracks (H3) responded to a crash on Route 1 Southbound in Sharon. When Troopers arrived on scene, they discovered a Ford Escape fully engulfed following a multi-vehicle crash involving a tractor-trailer and pickup truck.

Preliminary investigation indicates that the Ford Escape struck the tractor-trailer that was parked in the breakdown lane, causing the escape to spin into a Massachusetts Forest Fire Control Service pickup truck for reasons still under investigation.



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*

The Ford Escape then caught fire, also spreading to pickup truck. The operator of the pickup truck and the male occupant of the Ford Escape were transported by EMS with minor injuries to a local area hospital. The female occupant of the Ford Escape suffered serious injuries and was transported by EMS to Rhode Island Hospital. She later succumbed to her injuries.

The facts and circumstances of the crash remain under investigation by Troop H Detectives of the Massachusetts State Police along with the State Police Collision Analysis Reconstruction Section, and Crime Scene Services Section.

Troopers were assisted on scene by and Sharon Fire Department, Sharon, Massachusetts Police Department, Walpole Firefighters IAFF Local 2464, Walpole Police Department and MassDOT." - State Police Association of Massachusetts.



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*





*Massachusetts State Police photo.*



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*

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# Massachusetts woman arrested in connection with death of Boston Police officer found unresponsive during blizzard

“Massachusetts State Police homicide detectives attached to Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey’s office tonight arrested Karen A. Read, 41, of Mansfield, on a manslaughter warrant in the Saturday death of John O’Keefe, a Boston Police officer who was found unresponsive outside a Canton residence early Saturday morning (January 29, 2022).

“After several days of intensive investigation, detectives from the Norfolk District Attorney’s Office late today obtained an arrest warrant for Ms. Read,” District Attorney Morrissey said. “We expect that she will be arraigned close to 9 a.m. tomorrow (Feb. 2, 2022) in the Stoughton District Court.”

Read, who authorities say drove to the Fairview Road area with O’Keefe, possibly shortly after midnight, is charged with manslaughter, leaving the scene of a motor vehicle collision causing death, and motor vehicle homicide.

O’Keefe, 46, of Canton, was transported to the Good Samaritan Medical Center following his discovery and was pronounced dead several hours later.

Morrissey said that Read was taken to the State Police Blue Hills Barracks for processing last night.

“Additional narrative information may be put into the record during arraignment tomorrow,” District Attorney Morrissey said. “Tonight our thoughts are very much with those whom John left behind.” -Norfolk District Attorney’s Office.

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Message from Superintendent-in-Chief Gregory Long Regarding Arrest Made in Connection to the Death of Officer John O'Keefe:

"The Boston Police Department continues to grieve over the tragic loss of our brother Police Officer John O'Keefe. John was a kind person, dedicated to his family, and will be greatly missed by his coworkers and anyone who had the privilege of meeting him. Today, the Massachusetts State Police and the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office arrested the person responsible for John's death.

The Boston Police Department extends our sincere thanks to the members of the Canton Police Department, Canton Fire Department, Massachusetts State Police and Norfolk County District Attorney's Office for their efforts from the initial response under difficult conditions to today's arrest.

At this time, we are stunned and saddened and offer whatever support we can to John's family. Boston Police Peer Support will be available to assist department members in need of emotional support."

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## **New Bedford School Bus Stuck on Sassaquin Avenue**

Concerned parents in a local community group were rightfully upset when their kids did not show up from school earlier today. As of 5:30pm we could confirm that there were at least two students left on the school bus. "Pulaski Bus 11" is the vehicle that has gotten stuck. The road is currently blocked off as they try to extricate the vehicle and tow it. If you

are unfamiliar with Sassaquin Ave in the far north end, its a relatively steep hill with a nasty curve on a good day. Throw 2 feet of snow on top of it and its a disaster waiting to happen.

Several parents called the school department looking for guidance and were directed to call the bus company (Reliable) only to be hung up on. Finally a group of parents backtracked the route the bus was supposed to take only to find them stuck in the snow. It was at that point a public post was made and other parents chimed in who were also looking for their kids. Feedback from many reflected the above sentiment that information was scarce and many parents were left in the dark. Reports are that the bus driver remained calm and kept the kids under control. At some point the bus was evacuated do to its proximity to Sassaquin Pond. Not a single parent who posted in the group received a call from the school or the bus company explaining what was going on or where they could pick up their kids. This is a developing story.

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## **DA Quinn testifies in support of Massachusetts Gov. Baker's proposed amendments to dangerousness and bail revocation statutes**

Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III testified before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary last week in support of Gov. Charlie Baker's proposed amendments to the

state's Dangerousness Statute. The proposed changes would add specific crimes such as aggravated rape of a child to the list of offenses whereby prosecutors can request a dangerousness hearing.

"The proposed amendments to the dangerousness statute include common sense changes to the already existing statute. These changes do not impact a defendant's due process rights. They simply make it more equitable and fairer for victims and the administration of justice," District Attorney Quinn told the committee members.

The legislation, An Act to Protect Victims of Crime and the Public, would make several key changes to existing criminal law.

District Attorney Quinn specifically testified in support of the need to add serious crimes to the dangerousness statute because—under the current law—sexual crimes against children and other serious crimes cannot be subjected to a dangerousness hearing. This results in dangerous criminals being released back into the community on affordable bail.

"This doesn't make any sense," District Attorney Quinn testified. "A defendant in their 30s or 40s, charged with aggravated rape of a child, could have sex with a 10-year-old child and we could not even request a hearing to have them detained."

District Attorney Quinn went on to argue that cash bail is an outdated and arbitrary approach to detaining defendants. It is often unfair to certain defendants who lack financial resources. The amendments to the statute make it more equitable by focusing on the facts and the defendant's prior criminal record in determining someone's dangerousness.

"The real question is should a person be held or not held, not how much money they can afford to spend on bail," District Attorney Quinn testified.



District Attorney Quinn also voiced his support for Gov. Baker's proposal to do away with the arbitrary and unrealistic time frames associated with the dangerousness statute. The current statute allows a judge to detain a defendant found to be dangerous after a court hearing for only 120 days in district court or 180 days in superior court. This means dangerous defendants can often be released back out onto the streets before the disposition of their case. The governor's amendment would make it clear that defendants found dangerous by a judge would have to be brought to trial "as soon as is reasonably possible," while also making sure that defendants are detained (barring any significant change in circumstances) until the disposition of the case. This is consistent with the current rule of a defendant's right to a speedy trial.

"The current statute, frankly, provides the court with an insufficient amount of time to prosecute most cases in superior court. You don't suddenly become no longer dangerous after six months. Some of these cases involve domestic violence and violent sexual assaults. If released, dangerous defendants could present a threat to victims, which can result in continued intimidation that could negatively impact the case," District Attorney Quinn testified.

The dangerousness statute was initially created to protect domestic violence victims because of the number of domestic violence related homicides that occurred in the early 1990s.

District Attorney Quinn also testified in support of Gov. Baker's proposal to toughen the state's bail revocation statute. Currently, if a defendant commits a serious new crime while already out on bail for another case, that defendant could have his bail revoked for only 60 days in the district court or 90 days in the superior court. The district attorney likened the current bail revocation statute to a "kindergarten timeout" during his testimony. This can result in defendants who have committed another crime while out on bail to be released for no sound reason. The district attorney argued

that the changes to both the dangerousness and bail revocation statutes are “fair and reasonable amendments that would not violate the defendant’s due process rights while also better protecting victims and the public.”