



2021-2022 Legislative Session: Priority Legislation

The following is a list of legislation that JDI has prioritized in the current legislative session. This may be updated over time and does not necessarily represent all bills that JDI may prioritize. (*) Indicates legislation JDI filed in partnership with community stakeholders and the lead sponsors.

Education and Prevention

An Act Relative to Healthy Youth ([S2541/H673](#))

Educating youth on how to identify and have healthy, respectful relationships free of abusive behavior is critical to preventing and ending sexual and domestic violence. This bill ensures that sexuality education, when taught, is age appropriate and medically accurate.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Sal DiDomenico & Reps. James O'Day, and Vanna Howard

Racial Equity

An Act Relative to Language Access and Inclusion ([S2040/H3199](#))

Survivors need access to accurate, trauma-informed translation services when they seek support from social services and state agencies. This bill shines a light on the gaps that currently exist in language access in state institutions and requires state agencies to meet language access needs.

Lead sponsors: Rep. Adrian Madaro & Sen. Sal DiDomenico

An Act Establishing a Jail and Prison Construction Moratorium ([H1905/S2030](#))

Massachusetts continues to increase spending on incarceration even though the number of people in prisons and jails has decreased. This bill will pause the construction of any new prisons or jails in Massachusetts for 5 years, giving the Commonwealth an opportunity to shift spending priorities to invest in communities. Our local communities hold the knowledge to create sustainable solutions that address the root causes of incarceration.

Lead sponsors: Rep. Chyna Tyler & Sen. Joanne Comerford

Economic Justice

***An Act Supporting Survivors of Trafficking and Abuse and Encouraging Increased Access to Opportunities Through Expungement and/or Sealing of Records ([S947/H1825](#))**

Too often, survivors are criminalized for actions they engage in to survive (i.e. substance use/trade; sex work; economic crimes, etc.) Criminal histories make access to jobs and housing far more difficult for survivors. This bill expands options to expunge and/or seal criminal records without a waiting period for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and human trafficking and enhances survivor access to safety and economic stability.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz & Rep. Tram Nguyen

Economic Stability for Survivors

JDI prioritizes a range of legislation that will promote economic stability for survivors in a number of ways including access to affordable housing, access to basic benefits, employment protections, and more. We encourage you to refer to *JDI's Supported Legislation* document for an evolving list of legislative initiatives that fall into this priority.

Human Rights

An Act to Protect the Civil Rights and Safety of All Massachusetts Residents (Safe Communities Act) ([S1579/H2418](#))

Immigrant survivors and their families fear accessing services and systems that increase safety and support because of the threat of deportation. This bill rebuilds community trust by making it clear that immigration enforcement has no place in state and local law enforcement making it safer for survivors to come forward to seek support and services.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. James B. Eldridge & Reps. Ruth Balsler and Liz Miranda

Access to Justice for Survivors

***An Act Improving Protections for Sexual Assault Survivors ([S939/H1820](#))**

It has been 10 years since 258E (MA's sexual assault protection order) was enacted. This bill closes gaps in protections for sexual assault and other survivors seeking relief under the 258E statute and expands access to these orders.

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Harriette Chandler & Reps. Tram Nguyen and Natalie Higgins

***An Act protecting survivors of domestic abuse from abusive litigation ([HD3645](#))**

The misuse of the court system by people who cause harm to further tactics of abusive power and control is referred to as abusive litigation. These tactics can force survivors to appear repeatedly in court at their emotional and financial expense. This bill provides courts with a tool to curb abusive litigation and mitigate its harms.

Lead Sponsor: Rep. Natalie Blais