

Massachusetts Senate unanimously repeals drug-related driver's license suspension law

[JURIST] The Massachusetts state Senate [official website] unanimously passed [docket] a resolution [text] Thursday to repeal a law requiring a driver's license suspension of at least six months for anyone convicted of a drug crime. The law required the driver's license suspension in all circumstances of drug offenses, even if unrelated to vehicle operation. The bill, brought at the initiative of Senator Harriette Chandler [official profile], also includes a record expungement provision for past driver's license suspensions under the law, and is viewed as a step towards criminal justice reform in Massachusetts. The news was shared [tweet] by the official Twitter page of the Massachusetts Senate [social media website] with the hashtag CJreformMA.

Calls for criminal justice reform have become commonplace across the US recently. In July US President Barack Obama spoke at the NAACP Annual Convention and urged [JURIST report] Congress to reform the criminal justice system by enacting legislation that would enforce criminal laws fairly and reduce sentencing disparities. Earlier that week Obama commuted the sentences [JURIST report] of 46 drug offenders in what he said was part of an effort by his administration to remedy the unfairness of the criminal justice system. In 2010 Obama signed legislation that reduced the sentencing disparity [JURIST report] between crack and powder cocaine offenses from 100:1 to 18:1.

By Ashley Hogan