

The Honorable Claire D. Cronin, House Chair
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House, Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable James Eldridge, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House, Room 511C
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: In Support of H.3348, An Act Relative to Conducting a Study on
Sexual Offender Recidivism.**

Dear Chair Cronin, Chair Eldridge and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony regarding H.3348, *An Act relative to conducting a study on sexual offender recidivism*. The legislation will require a much needed study of sexual offender recidivism to determine whether the Commonwealth's classification system is accurately classifying offenders. This was an issue of much concern and discussion for the statutorily established Special Commission to Reduce the Recidivism of Sex Offenders that was chaired by Representative Brodeur and Senator Brownsberger. The Special Commission's mandate was to study the most reliable protocols for assessing and managing the risk of recidivism of sex offenders and make recommendations that will better protect the public while being fair to offenders who pose little risk.

There are some predictive tools, such as Static-99, that scores offenders to identify those most likely to reoffend. It assigns risk points for factors including similar prior offenses, young age, lack of stable love relationships and victims who are strangers. Offenders with the most points are the most likely to reoffend. Studies show that instruments, like Static-99, more effectively sort out offenders than do professionals applying their own experience and judgment. Professionals are needed to identify the risk indicators but

statistical approaches are more accurate at adding up the risk indicators. Unfortunately, no tool at present has a high accuracy. For juvenile offenders, our predictive tools do little better than chance.

This legislation will provide the study needed to better protect the public and manage the affected individuals as the majority of convicted sex offenders are subject to registration and receive no special support or oversight. An independent organization, selected by the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Security, will conduct the study.

This research will continue the work of the Special Commission and will provide information on recidivism rates of juveniles and adults by gender and age. This data and the required report will increase public safety by informing our classification system and our agencies' sex offender programs and services.

I ask for your support and a favorable vote to make the needed changes to better serve and protect the public.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter,

Representative Kay Khan