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MHLAC asks for your support on an important bill that would significantly improve one of our most important public safety mechanisms: parole. ***An Act Establishing Presumptive Parole (H.1960, Rep. Rogers)*** provides a simple yet incredibly effective mechanism through which to streamline and improve the parole process. In keeping with parole “best practices,” this bill would shift the burden of proof from the person seeking parole to the Parole Board. It requires that people up for parole are to be released at the time of parole eligibility unless the Parole Board shows by clear and convincing evidence that they would violate the law if released under appropriate conditions and community supervision.

- The notion of parole is that it be reasonably automatic once the incarcerated individual has served the minimum required term. Instead, we find that all too many people remain behind bars indefinitely, due to the current parole structure.
- This is an easy to implement and cost-free bill that will align the Massachusetts process with what are considered parole “best practices”. There is no apparent opposition to this bill.
- Of states with discretionary parole, 34% already have some degree of presumptive parole, including at least 8 so-called “red” states. We do not want to be behind the curve in righting the many wrongs caused by mass incarceration, of which the parole process is a primary driver.
- This bill also heightens protections for people with disabilities. Among other things, it require that the Department of Public Health and/or the Department of Mental Health help secure appropriate placements for individuals with disabilities who are granted parole but who are unable to secure a home plan.
- This bill is a win-win for all involved stakeholders. There is no downside!