

An Act to prevent the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences based on juvenile adjudications (Give Youth a Future)

Senate Sponsor: State Senator Jamie Eldridge
House Sponsor: State Representative Frank Moran



SUMMARY

This bill promotes **fair sentencing for youth** who find themselves involved in the juvenile justice system. It gives youth a future. Specifically, it prevents courts from **lengthening certain mandatory-minimum sentences** based on a person's actions as a child (i.e. juvenile court adjudications).

HISTORY OF JUVENILE SENTENCING

The late Chief Justice Gants, in a **concurring opinion** joined by current Chief Justice Budd, urged "the Legislature to consider the wisdom and fairness of the mandatory-minimum aspect of those enhanced sentences, especially where the predicate offenses were committed when the defendant was a juvenile." Id. at 332. **Passing this bill would honor the memory of Justice Gants and his commitment to justice for all.**

WHY THIS BILL MATTERS

Black and Latinx youth are more likely than white youth to be advanced through the juvenile justice system – rather than being diverted at most decision points through formal or informal resolutions of their cases. **Black and Latinx youth are 1.526 and 2.46 times, respectively, more likely than white youth to have a delinquency petition.** Then, those juvenile adjudications follow them into adulthood, leading to more severe punishment for Black and Latinx adults.

It's time to right this wrong. A diverse group of organizations support this criminal justice reform bill.