



# Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association

44 School Street, Suite 300  
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February 5, 2024

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Representative Carlos Gonzalez, Co-Chair  
Senator Walter F. Timilty, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
(Sent VIA Email Only)  
Re: HB2422- *An Act Relative to the Security of Exercise Equipment and Free Weights in Correctional Institutions*

Dear Chair Gonzalez and Chair Timilty,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association (MSA) and the fourteen duly elected Sheriffs of the Commonwealth, I write in my capacity as Executive Director to ask the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security to provide support of House Bill (HB) 2422- *An Act Relative to the Security of Exercise Equipment and Free Weights in Correctional Institutions*, sponsored by Representative Steven Xiarhos.

HB 2422, also known as Matt's Law, is named after Matt Tidman, a former corrections officer who is now permanently disabled with a traumatic brain injury after being attacked by an inmate back in 2022. This incident serves as an important reminder of the dangerous nature correctional staff face, highlighting the urgency of implementing safeguards to prevent similar occurrences in the future. This legislation is both timely and vital for the safety and well-being of correctional facility staff and inmates.

By imposing measures to prevent the removal of exercise equipment, the bill acknowledges the potential risks associated with providing incarcerated individuals access to such tools. Furthermore, the restriction of free weights creates a controlled environment that minimizes the opportunities for violence and ensures greater safety.

Matt's Law is not just a legislative response, but commitment to the safety and security of correctional facilities in response to a tragic event that we hope never happens again. By supporting this bill, we honor Mr. Tidman and work towards creating an environment that prioritizes the well-being of correctional staff while creating an atmosphere conducive to rehabilitation.

We respectfully request **the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security to vote favorably on this legislation.** Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you require additional information or have any questions.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Carrie Hill,  
Executive Director