

STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEVEN G. XIARHOS

BEACON HILL BRIEF

January In-Review

February 10, 2024



Friends,

Welcome to the **January** edition of my monthly newsletter where you can review some of last month's highlights as your 5th Barnstable State Representative. For a more in-depth breakdown, I release a report every week sharing my weekly highlights across our district.

As always, my office remains committed to having constituent services as our number one priority. If you are having issues with Unemployment, the RMV, or any other state agency, please contact us directly and we will assist you in whatever way we can. I can be reached at my email:

Steven.Xiarhos@mahouse.gov or by phone: (617) 722-2488. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Yours in Service,

Steven G. Xiarhos



WELCOME

FIRST DAY 5K IN SANDWICH

1/1/24



DAKOTA'S' LAW PRESS CONFERENCE IN SPRINGFIELD

1/4/24



MILITARY APPRECIATION HOCKEY GAME AT HYANNIS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTER

1/6/24



MLK DAY REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HYANNIS

1/14/24



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State Rep. Steve Xiarhos
MA State House, Room 542
24 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02133

OFFICE HOURS:

Friday, February 23, 2024

West Barnstable Fire Station
9:30 to 10:30 AM

Sandwich Public Library -
MacKnight Room 11:00 AM to
12:00 PM

Bourne Veterans Memorial
Community Center 12:30 to 1:30
PM

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook: @XiarhosForRep

Instagram: @XiarhosForRep

Twitter: @X4Barnstable5th

Website: xiarhosforrep.com

WEST BARNSTABLE CIVIC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

1/16/24



GOVERNOR'S 'STATE OF THE COMMONWEALTH' ADDRESS

1/18/24



JOINT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS & FEDERAL AFFAIRS HEARING

1/23/24



PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE WITH MONTESSORI BEGINNINGS SCHOOL IN FORESTDALE

1/25/24



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

5th Barnstable District
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Representative Xiarhos Testifies in Support of “Matt’s Law”

Legislation seeks to prevent future attacks on corrections officers in state prisons.

BOSTON - State Representative Steve Xiarhos (R – 5th Barnstable) was honored to testify in support of “Matt’s Law” (H2422) before the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security on January 23.

According to Xiarhos, who is the lead sponsor of the legislation, “Matt’s Law” was filed in response to an attack on Corrections Officer Matt Tidman at MCI Shirley in August 2022. A convicted murderer who was incarcerated at the facility took a metal bar from a free weight in the prison gym and used it to brutally beat Tidman, who sustained extremely serious bodily injuries. The bill filed by Xiarhos would ban the use of free weights and other portable exercise equipment for use by inmates in state prisons.

“This bill is not only a necessary measure for the safety of our corrections officers but also for the welfare of the inmate population,” Xiarhos told members of the legislative committee at a Statehouse public hearing. “The tragic incident involving Corrections Officer Matt Tidman... has brought to light a critical oversight in our prison system’s safety protocols [and] underlines the urgent need for reform.”

Xiarhos, a former police officer for forty years, is a vocal advocate in favor of first responders and law enforcement workers across Massachusetts and said “Matt’s Law” is consistent with those efforts. “The men and women who serve as corrections officers undertake a challenging and often dangerous role, deserving of our utmost efforts to ensure their safety. House Bill 2422 is a vital step towards this goal, removing a source of potential weapons and thereby reducing the risk of similar violent incidents in the future.”

[Media Note – the text of prepared remarks delivered by Rep. Xiarhos to members of the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security on January 23 follow below....]

Honorable Members of the Committee,

As a Massachusetts State Representative and a former police officer with 40 years of dedicated service, I testify today to express my unequivocal support for House Bill 2422, known as "Matt’s Law." This bill, which seeks to ban the use of free weights in state prisons, is not only a necessary measure for the safety of our corrections officers but also for the welfare of the inmate population

The tragic incident involving Corrections Officer Matt Tidman, who was brutally attacked and nearly killed by a convicted murderer wielding a steel bar from a free weight set, has brought to light a critical oversight in our prison system’s safety protocols. This harrowing event underlines the urgent need for reform. Officer Tidman, who dedicated his career to maintaining order and safety within the prison walls, became a victim of a preventable act of violence, highlighting a significant risk that free weights pose in the prison environment.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

Steven G. Xiarhos
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

5th Barnstable District
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As someone who has spent four decades in law enforcement, I understand the paramount importance of officer safety. The men and women who serve as corrections officers undertake a challenging and often dangerous role, deserving of our utmost efforts to ensure their safety. House Bill 2422 is a vital step towards this goal, removing a source of potential weapons and thereby reducing the risk of similar violent incidents in the future.

Furthermore, this bill aligns with our responsibility to provide a safe and rehabilitative environment for inmates. Removing free weights from prisons eliminates a tool that can be used for harm, contributing to a more secure setting that is conducive to rehabilitation and reducing inmate-on-inmate violence.

The passage of this law will demonstrate a commitment to proactive safety measures, a hallmark of a modern and responsible correctional system. While physical fitness and recreation are important aspects of life in correctional facilities, they can be sufficiently maintained through safer alternatives to free weights, such as bodyweight exercises or secure exercise equipment.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to pass House Bill 2422. By doing so, we honor Officer Tidman's service and make a clear statement about our commitment to the safety and security of our corrections officers and the inmate population under their supervision. Let us ensure that the horrific attack on Officer Tidman is not in vain but serves as a catalyst for positive change in our correctional system.

Thank you for your consideration of this crucial matter.

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1/10/24

PRESS RELEASE



XIARHOS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



Representative Xiarhos supports bill to criminalize revenge porn and educate minor offenders through diversion

BOSTON - State Representative Steven Xiarhos (R-Barnstable) is backing efforts to crack down on “revenge porn” by supporting legislation that imposes strong penalties for sharing sexually explicit images or videos without the consent of the individual being photographed or recorded.

House Bill 4241, An Act to prevent abuse and exploitation, would also allow for the commitment of minor offenders to the Department of Youth Services while establishing an alternative comprehensive educational diversion program to help adolescents understand the legal and non-legal consequences of possessing or disseminating explicit visual material. The bill was engrossed by the House of Representatives on a vote of 151-0 on January 10.

According to Rep. Xiarhos, the educational diversion program will be

developed and implemented by the Attorney General in consultation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Youth Services, and the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association, and will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. The House bill also encourages school districts to implement media literacy skills instruction at all grade levels, and to incorporate aspects of the educational diversion program as a learning tool for students.

Massachusetts is one of only two states without a law banning revenge porn, the other being South Carolina. House Bill 4241 would change that by imposing a punishment of up to 2 ½ years in a House of Correction, a \$10,000 fine, or both a fine and imprisonment for individuals found guilty of disseminating explicit visual materials of another person without their consent.

House Bill 4241 also increases the existing fine for criminal harassment from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and amends the definition of abuse to include coercive control. Under the bill, coercive control is defined as an act or pattern of behavior committed with the intent to substantially restrict an individual's safety or autonomy through threat, intimidation, harassment, isolation, control, coercion, or compelled compliance.

Representative Xiarhos supported a similar bill filed by former Governor Charlie Baker during the 2021-2022 legislative session, which was engrossed by the House of Representatives on May 26, 2022. Despite unanimous support in the House, the Senate took no action on the bill until the final day of the session on January 3, 2023, engrossing an amended version of the bill that could not be reconciled with the House bill before time ran out.

During floor debate, Representative Xiarhos supported an amendment to the bill that addresses non-consensual "deepfake pornography" involving the use of digitization, which is defined as "creat(ing) or alter(ing) visual material, including, but not limited to, through the use of computer-generated images, in a manner that would falsely appear to a reasonable person to be an authentic representation of the person depicted." The amendment stipulates that the dissemination of deepfake pornography will be punishable by up to 2 ½ years in a House of Correction, a \$10,000 fine, or both.

House Bill 4241, as amended, now moves to the Senate for its consideration.

#

PASSED: H4241

An Act to Prevent Abuse and Exploitation

- Expands the legal definition of abuse to include coercive control.
- Criminallizes distribution of nude content featuring another person without their permission.
- Requires the creation of a sexting educational diversion program for youth offenders.



JOIN US!



FEBRUARY OFFICE HOURS

Friday, February 23, 2024

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 - 12:30pm-1:30pm



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(617) 722 - 2488

To schedule a meeting with Rep. Xiarhos,
please email his Legislative Aide, Stuart,
at Stuart.Daniels@mahouse.gov or call (617) 722 -2488