



Testimony Submitted to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
In support of S.729 — An Act relative to parole eligibility  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports a “corrections system which provides opportunities for the rehabilitation of the adult and juvenile offender” and supports “measures to promote the offender's rehabilitation through individualized treatment” and “programs within the Department of Corrections that gradually allow the prisoner more freedom and more responsibility as merited.”

We believe S.729 supports the League’s commitment to a human service focus for corrections by providing an increased incentive for a prisoner to participate in work, education, vocational training and/or social skills programs while incarcerated, which should have more individuals earning certificates and degrees, learning work and life skills and being readied for a successful release to society.

It is also important to make sure that implementation is accessible to all prisoners and applied fairly so that those with disabilities, the elderly, ethnic minorities, etc. can earn time off for effort even if they are not able to attain a specific outcome.<sup>1</sup>

S.279 bill does not address inmates serving mandatory minimum sentences, who currently are not eligible to earn time off for good behavior. Allowing these individuals to earn time off their sentence by participating in rehabilitation programs and allowing them to be eligible for parole should help address the lack of incentive to participate in programming and allow those individuals to acquire the support they need to become better citizens during internment and after their release.

As the cost of incarcerating individuals decreases due to shortened detention time, and the potential for decreased recidivism, the savings should be transferred to increasing rehabilitative programs in detention and also in the community. I have heard from the Middlesex Sheriff’s office that many individuals remain incarcerated after being granted conditional parole because no openings are available.

Thank you for your consideration.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/IEP%20Briefing%20Prison%20Reform%20Trust.pdf>