



## Legislation Summary:

### An Act relative to criminal justice reform

Initial bill number: S.2200/H.4043 (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsor: Drafted by Joint Committee on the Judiciary

This bill is the omnibus criminal justice reform bill crafted by the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, encompassing provisions from the many criminal justice reform bills filed this session. It was reported out of the joint committee in November 2017, and different versions passed the Senate and the House just before the Thanksgiving recess. A conference committee was convened to reconcile the two versions, and as of mid-February, the conference committee had not reported out a final version of the bill.

LWVMA encourages the conference committee to adopt the best features of each version for a strong final bill. LWVMA applauds the inclusion by both chambers of measures to decriminalize, increase possibilities for diversion, remove mandatory minimums, oversee and reduce solitary confinement, allow for medical placement, improve juvenile justice, and reduce collateral consequences. We are also pleased that a commission to study and improve mental health of correctional officers and suicide prevention has been proposed. It is also important to have improved data collection, reporting and use.

The League urges the conference committee to include provisions to:

- Repeal mandatory minimums; incarceration is not the way to overcome addiction
- Expand restorative justice and diversion programs
- Adopt the Senate provision to increase the weight limit for certain trafficking offenses; treatment is a better way to address addiction
- Raise the age for juvenile jurisdiction from 7 to 12 years old and include 18-year-olds
- Increase the felony larceny threshold to at least \$1500; our current level is outdated
- Restrict use of solitary confinement
- Seal records for resisting arrest and other offenses
- Eliminate many fines and fees; being poor is not a crime
- Take primary caretaker status into account in sentencing so children aren't punished
- Include cognitive decline for medical transfer of the terminally ill or incapacitated

**League position:** The League of Women Voters at both national and state levels opposes mandatory minimum sentences, including for non-violent drug-related offenses. LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. LWVMA supports prison sentences for violent crimes against the person and habitual

criminals and alternative punishments for offenders who commit nonviolent crimes, juveniles, first offenders, and offenders where mitigating circumstances exist.