

# Legislative Update; Next Steps.

A successful hearing occurred last October 10th on our bills (S.826, H.3358), with nearly 60 individuals representing a wide range of experience and organizations testifying in support, and some 9 individuals testifying in opposition. The bills had gained over 35 Senate and Representative co-sponsors, a very impressive number for this first effort.

On Wednesday, February 5th, The Joint Committee on the Judiciary decided to send both bills “to study” which translates as no further consideration this year. However, both bills will be introduced for the next two year session – 2021/2022.

Our work will continue as we work to broaden support among legislators and among citizens and organizations. We want to encourage other religious organizations to join with the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ in endorsing the concept of ending life sentences without parole.

We seek invitations to speak to civic and religious organizations in an effort to broaden the conversation. We understand that victims’ families and friends carry a heavy burden of the loss of a loved one. It is our expectation that dialogue about the loss can ameliorate that burden, that such a burden is not lessened by placing an equivalent burden on others’ shoulders, but rather by sharing the burden even with those whose violence created the weight.