

**2011-2012 Session  
Legislative Priorities****Senate Bill No. 918****An Act Providing Employment Leave and Safety Remedies to Victims of Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Sexual Assault**

This legislation would protect employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking from being penalized in the workplace for taking time off to address issues related to being a victim of such crimes. The bill provides that employers of workplaces of 50 employees or larger must provide up to 15 days of leave (paid or unpaid) to individuals who use the time to attend to medical, mental health, criminal justice, or other issues related to their experience of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault.

Jane Doe Inc. supports this legislation because it addresses the rights of victims in the workplace and will help victims get the assistance they need without threatening the financial security (which may be their only access to economic stability) and social support systems that a job provides.

**Lead Sponsor:** Senator Cynthia Creem (D- 1<sup>st</sup> Norfolk & Middlesex)

**Status of Bill:** Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development

**Senate Bill No. 586****House Bill No. 386****An Act Relative to Housing Rights for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking**

This bill provides housing rights and protections for victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault and stalking. It creates a defense to eviction if a landlord attempts to evict a tenant because he/she was the victim of one of these crimes. The bill also creates a provision for victims of these crimes, with appropriate documentation, to vacate their lease or rental agreements without financial penalty. Finally, the bill has a provision that allows for victims to have their locks changed.

Victims often face financial and legal barriers to leaving their housing, even when staying in their home is unsafe. Many also face discrimination from prospective landlords when/if a past history of abuse is known. Jane Doe Inc. believes that no one should have to choose between their safety and keeping or finding housing.

**Lead Sponsors:** Senator Cynthia Creem (D- 1<sup>st</sup> Norfolk & Middlesex)  
Representative Ellen Story (D – 3<sup>rd</sup> Hampshire)

**Status of Bill:** Joint Committee on Housing

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