



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR EDWARD J. KENNEDY

*First Middlesex District*

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May 14, 2019

The Honorable James B. Eldridge, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Claire D. Cronin, House Chair  
The Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
Massachusetts State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Eldridge and Chairwoman Cronin,

I appreciate the consideration by the Joint Committee on the Judiciary of **Senate Bill 963, *An Act prohibiting gunfire directed at dwelling houses***, the Senate companion to Representative Mom's bill of the same name, and urge the Committee to support the favorable passage of this legislation.

It is an unfortunate reality that many neighborhoods throughout the Commonwealth grapple with public safety problems associated with gang activity. Despite successful measures taken in the Commonwealth to mitigate such threats at both the state and local level, occasional acts of gun violence continue, instilling fear in communities and generating undue apprehension in neighborhoods. In certain cases, ordinary citizens can find themselves in harm's way from simply going about their day-to-day lives or even in the comfort of their own home. According to the Lowell Police Department there have been 96 incidents involving firearms being discharged at homes within the past five years in the City of Lowell, including one such occurrence as recent as this March.

While the issue of discharging firearms at a home is of grave public concern, Massachusetts law does not adequately prosecute those who are caught doing so.

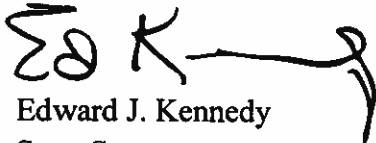
Currently, someone who fires in a residential area can be prosecuted for the misdemeanor of discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling. This charge is woefully disproportionate to the severity of any incident in which gunfire is directed at a home. Acts of this nature rattle the

sense of security within communities and injure, or sometimes kill, innocent people inside their own homes.

As lawmakers, it is our duty to equip law enforcement officials and prosecutors with the means to protect the communities that we all serve. This bill creates a new felony charge for intentionally striking a home with gunfire and someone who is convicted would face up to five years in prison.

This is an important tool that will help public safety and law enforcement officials disrupt gang violence and protect our neighborhoods. I respectfully request that this bill receive a favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (617) 722-1630.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Kennedy", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a small loop at the end.

Edward J. Kennedy

State Senator

First Middlesex District