

NEWS FROM



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STATE REP. LEIGH DAVIS BILL TO PROTECT YOUTH CLEARS KEY COMMITTEE

Boston, MA — Representative Leigh Davis (D–Great Barrington) announced today that H.1634, her bill to strengthen protections for youth against sexual exploitation, has been reported favorably out of the Judiciary Committee in a redrafted form, now combined with related measures as H.4538.

“This is a momentous and important step forward in closing loopholes in Massachusetts law and strengthening protections for our youth,” said Rep. Davis. “I am grateful that provisions from my bill were incorporated into H.4538, and thank the survivors, advocates, prosecutors, and colleagues who have worked tirelessly to get us here.”

The redrafted bill, H.4538 — An Act Relative to Preventing Educator Sexual Misconduct and Abuse of Children and Youth — consolidates five related measures, including H.1634. Language from H.1634 creates a new criminal offense for adults in positions of authority or trust at schools who exploit students, affirming that young people in these circumstances cannot consent. The Senate companion bill, filed by Senator Joan Lovely, has also advanced, underscoring the bicameral commitment to protecting youth.

Davis stressed that while the Judiciary Committee’s favorable report is a milestone, more work remains. “This is a critical step forward, but our work isn’t finished. I’ll keep pushing until this bill becomes law. Protecting our youth must remain a priority.”

Representative Davis expressed her deep appreciation to the Judiciary Committee — especially Chair Michael Day and his staff — for their diligence and expertise in shaping

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this legislation. She also recognized Representatives Carole Fiola, Ken Gordon, Natalie Blais, and John Lawn for their leadership and collaboration in advancing the bill. Davis offered a special note of gratitude to Senator Lovely, who has championed these protections for years with determination and persistence.

Davis further commended the courage of former Miss Hall's School students and survivors Melissa Fares and Hilary Simon Say, who testified alongside her before the Judiciary Committee this past July 17. "Their willingness to share their stories has been instrumental in building support for this bill and ensuring that young people's voices are heard on Beacon Hill," Davis said.

H.4538 has now been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee for further consideration.

For more information, visit: <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H4538>

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