



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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October 4, 2005

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
House Chairman, Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Room 138, State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman O'Flaherty,

I am writing in support of House bill 706, *A Resolve to Establish a Special Commission to Investigate the Integration of International Human Rights Standards into Massachusetts State Law and Policies*. This innovative legislation will integrate international human rights standards and protections into state law.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has the opportunity to be a leader in government reform if it adopts this legislation. A similar effort undertaken by the Pennsylvania General Assembly from 2002-2004 yielded meaningful recommendations to reform health care financing, the way human services are provided and housing policy.

This legislation does not create new rights or put more restrictions on the Commonwealth; rather, it allows us to audit the implementation of the Legislature's policies. A preventative approach to problems of discrimination is better for Massachusetts, because we will be able to identify and change problem programs and policies before people are harmed – and before the issues end up before a judge.

The Commonwealth should be proactive in securing the best possible policies for its residents. Please release H 706 with your favorable recommendation at your next executive session.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen Story".

Ellen Story
State Representative
3rd Hampshire District