



## More on the Massachusetts Alimony Reform Issue

*by STEPHEN MCDONOUGH on AUGUST 20, 2009*

My last post concerning the **Boston Magazine** article on alimony in Massachusetts received quite a few comments. Thanks to everyone that posted on this blog and also emailed me about their own alimony experiences in Massachusetts. Many of the comments – all of which were thoughtfully written - were from folks affiliated with the [Massachusetts Alimony Reform Group](#). From their website you can also link directly to the recent special report that Fox 25 News did about the alimony issue, and read about some “alimony horror stories” as well as review the group’s sponsored legislation regarding alimony reform, [House Bill 1785](#).

I have not had time to read any of the alimony horror stories, but one person emailed me and said I should have a “good, stiff drink” in my hand when I read them! Although not my most developed trait, I am able to take direction *at times*, so I hope to read some of the alimony horror stories this weekend with an adult beverage, probably something with a lime in it.

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*If You Don't Pay Your Alimony in Massachusetts, You May End Up in Jail*

The bill is actually quite brief. Much shorter than the scary-looking health care reform bill I saw on the news anyway. After reading it, my opinion of the bill was mostly favorable (the alimony one, not the health care bill). When I practiced in North Carolina, alimony with a duration of about one-half the length of the marriage was commonplace. This bill references that same standard and caps the number of years alimony can be paid at 12 years, unless the recipient has custody (sole or joint) of children from the marriage under the age of sixteen, then alimony could continue until children reach the age of 16.

I am not sure why the age of 16 was used in the bill (except to lower alimony payments sooner of course) and it seems that 18 might make more sense in order to standardize the age with the child support guidelines.

The bill is only a couple of pages, so if you are a alimony recipient or payor then take a few minutes and read it over. Please share your thoughts on the bill and this issue. It would be great to hear from some alimony receivers as well!

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