



# Massachusetts Alimony Reform Around the Corner?

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Whether you call it alimony or spousal support, some people love it, some people hate it. In Massachusetts, many people inside and outside the legal community have been anticipating changes to our much-maligned alimony statute and system, which is definitely unlike other states. For more info on MA alimony reform please read my earlier posts on the subject, including this [post from October, 2010](#). As a reminder, you can always use the search function on the site to find what you are looking for.

This issue has been one of the hot topics in Massachusetts divorce and family law, primarily driven by the work of a grassroots group, [Massachusetts Alimony Reform](#), started by Steve Hitner. Mr. Hitner, like many other alimony payors, found the current statute unfair and outdated. Unlike most people, he did something about it, and the actions by his group definitely played a big part in

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moving these changes to the front of the legislative stage. Democracy in action!

### ***So, what has changed?***

On January 18, 2011, there was a press release from Senator Gale Candaras, Esq. and Representative John Fernandes announcing the filing of new legislation aimed at reforming the Massachusetts alimony system. The bill was the by-product of a 14 person Joint Task Force established by the legislature's Judiciary Committee comprised of Candras and Fernandes, Massachusetts divorce attorneys representing different bar associations, Judge Paula Carey (Chief Justice of the Probate and Family Court) and Mr. Hitner, representing is group MA Alimony Reform.

The proposed law is called the *Alimony Reform Act of 2011*. Click on the link to read the full text of the proposed bill. It is the product of much work by the task force over the past 14 months. Last year there were two (that I was aware of) proposed alimony bills, but both had a number of problems and neither reached a level of consensus. This new bill seems to have the support required to move forward and the buzz is that it (or something similar) could pass this Spring.

### **This is proposed legislation and is not the law in the Commonwealth.**

It does seem to be where we are headed, and my friend and fellow attorney Justin Kelsey already added a new alimony calculator to his firm's website, which you can [check out here](#). Although this calculator is certainly helpful, the new statute is not completely formulaic, and there are plenty of areas where the courts can deviate from the general terms set forth in the statute. Perhaps even more interesting will be to watch the court's decisions after the new law goes into effect.

I will follow up this post with another to review of the proposed Alimony Reform

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Act of 2011.

***The Divorce Collaborative LLC is a Massachusetts law firm with offices in Franklin and Bedford, MA. Please visit [www.divorcecollaborative.com](http://www.divorcecollaborative.com) or call (508) 346-3805 for more information.***

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