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Metro

# Police union blasts Patrick on crime bill

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JULY 30, 2012

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A police labor union blasted Governor Deval Patrick for rejecting a newly passed crime bill because it did not give judges more flexibility in sentencing repeat felons.

On Saturday, Patrick asked state lawmakers to amend the so-called three strikes bill, which would make repeat offenders of certain violent crimes ineligible for parole after three convictions, or else he would refuse to sign it. The governor wants the bill to include a provision allowing sentencing judges to bypass the three-strikes rule for some convicts who have served two-thirds of their sentences or, in the case of a life sentence, 25 years.

But the New England Police Benevolent Association said those changes would undermine the purpose of the three-strikes bill.

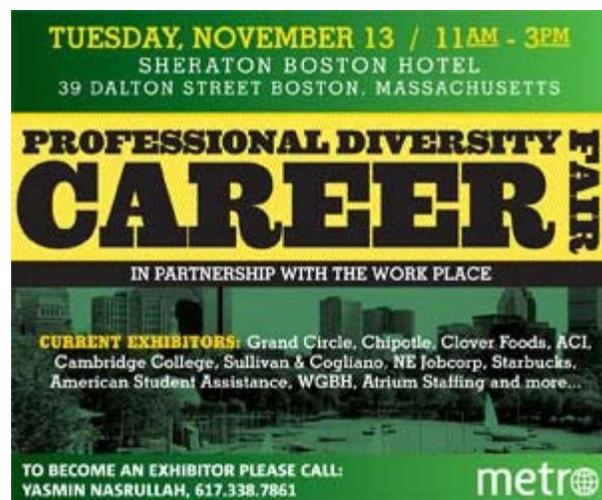
“We are distraught by Governor Patrick’s refusal to protect the law enforcement community, and we are alarmed that his watering down of this legislation would put our members in harm’s way,” said the

statement from union executive director, Jerry Flynn.

The statement cited the Dec. 2010 murder of Woburn Police Officer John "Jack" Maguire as an example of the type of incident the bill is intended to prevent. While responding to a robbery, Maguire was shot and killed by a man who was on parole even though he had been sentenced to three terms of 15 years to life.

"It will be on [Patrick's] conscience 'when' — not if — the next innocent victim or public safety officer is killed in the line of duty by a career criminal, if he fails to sign this bill which is designed to protect the most vulnerable from serial predators," the union statement said.

The bill was overwhelmingly approved by the legislature earlier this month, and some legislators have vowed to oppose the changes Patrick requested. Prior versions of the bill did include language giving judges the flexibility Patrick is seeking, but that was removed from the final version.



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*The statement cited the slaying of Woburn Officer John Maguire.*

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