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Bill Prompted By Hernandez Verdict Dismissal After Suicide

January 30, 2018 at 3:31 pm

Filed Under: [Aaron Hernandez](#), [Local TV](#), [Odin Lloyd](#)

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BOSTON (CBS/AP) — The prison suicide of former NFL star [Aaron Hernandez](#) is prompting lawmakers to revisit a centuries-old Massachusetts legal principle.

Under a bill heard Tuesday by the Legislature's Judiciary Committee, people who kill themselves after being convicted of a crime would automatically lose all rights to appeal.

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Fighting back tears, Ursula Ward testified to the committee.

Hernandez’s murder conviction in the 2013 killing of Ward’s son, [Odin Lloyd](#), was dismissed after Hernandez was found hanging in his cell last April. The legal principle holds that a defendant who dies before an appeal is heard should no longer be considered guilty in the eyes of the law.

“I feel that Odin has not been able to rest in peace,” Ward said. “This news was devastating. I felt like I was burying my son all over again.”

The former New England Patriot tight end was serving a life sentence for shooting Lloyd to death when he was found dead.

Democratic Rep. Evandro Carvalho, of Boston, filed the legislation after meeting with Lloyd’s mother, Ursula Ward, who was upset when the conviction was erased.

Ward’s attorney Douglas Sheff said, “We believe the entire antiquated law of abatement should be eliminated and certainly in the case of suicide. The criminals should not be able to decide if his conviction should stand.”

The bill, if passed, could not be applied retroactively to Hernandez but it would assure families do not have to deal with “re-traumatization,” according to Ward.

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