

# Mother of Odin Lloyd says family 'retraumatized' over Hernandez's vacated conviction



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

**Ursula Ward, the mother of Odin Lloyd , after she testified at a House Judiciary Committee hearing at the Massachusetts State House on Tuesday.**

By [Akilah Johnson](#)

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The mother of a man killed by former New England Patriots football star Aaron Hernandez said Tuesday that her family was “retraumatized” and “revictimized” when

Hernandez's murder conviction was vacated because of his suicide in prison.

Ursula Ward, whose son, Odin L. Lloyd, was killed by Hernandez, testified at the State House in favor of legislation intended to prevent convictions from being erased due to the suicide of the convicted person.

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Decades of precedent have held that a conviction is not final until a trial is examined by an appellate court.

Hernandez was convicted in Bristol Superior Court in 2015 for murdering Lloyd in North Attleborough in 2013, and an attorney had been assigned to handle the appeal. However, Hernandez committed suicide on April 14, 2017, before the appeal and five days after he was acquitted in Suffolk Superior Court in the murders of two other men in Boston. So his conviction in the Lloyd case was vacated.

The legislation is being championed by state Representative Evandro Carvalho, who said he didn't want to be insensitive to the issue of suicide, but "the defendant shouldn't make a decision like that to take away the rights of survivors to get justice."

Carvalho said his proposed bill is not retroactive and would only address situations when a defendant dies by suicide.

During her State House testimony, Ward had to stop several times and collect herself. Lloyd was her first-born child, she told the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. "He was a loving, giving man with a heart as big as the world," she said, her voice cracking.

Ward said she learned of Hernandez's suicide when a friend called and told her to turn on the news.

"There were a lot of emotions running through me," she said. "I wondered where justice was."

News that Hernandez's conviction would be vacated was devastating and made her feel as if her family was being punished, she said.

"Court proceedings after a homicide are a retraumatizing experience for family. I buried my son, gone through a trial, heard and saw tough evidence, and feel as if Odin has not been able to rest in peace, and I have not been able to properly grieve," she told the committee.

"This bill will not change anything for myself, but it will support families . . . so that no one has to deal with the retraumatization of a vacated conviction upon suicide."

Ward's attorney, Douglas Sheff, called the existing law "antiquated."

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