3. The MA Attorney-General's office has proposed a [substantial expansion](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/Senate/S654) of the state's electronic wiretapping powers. Do you support or oppose this expansion?

**S. 654 is the Attorney General’s bill, sponsored by Senator Clark, to make it easier for prosecutors to get wiretap orders. It broadens the set of crimes for which wiretaps are available in Massachusetts — currently they are only available for crimes committed in the context of organized crime.  Massachusetts wiretap warrants are very hard to get.**

**Senator Clark’s bill would eliminate organized crime as a predicate for wiretapping, turning simple drug possession and many other crimes into crimes that a prosecutor could seek a wiretap to investigate, even if not involving “highly organized and disciplined groups” and “brutal and violent tactics”.**

**Senator Clark’s bill would allow prosecutors to target people and wiretap them even for drug possession, including marijuana possession, even if they were not involved in organized crime. I oppose this broad expansion.**

**I do not have a problem with extending the availability of wiretaps to street murder cases that are hard to solve now — even if they do not involve organized crime — but the bill goes too far by extending wiretapping to routine drug possession and dealing.**

*NOTE FROM DIGITAL FOURTH:*

*Though the proposed expansion does incorporate all crimes in the chapter of the Mass. General Laws relating to drug offenses, and therefore includes simple marijuana possession, federal law would prohibit state entities from conducting electronic wiretaps relating to crimes potentially carrying penalties of one year in prison. So, under current federal law, they could conduct no wiretaps for simple marijuana possession. However, it is common for prosecutors to inflate charges relating to marijuana possession into charges that would carry more than one year in prison, such as marijuana possession near a school, or possession of an amount that could be interpreted as suggesting an intent to distribute.*

*For Digital Fourth’s reporting on the proposed expansion, see:*

<http://warrantless.org/2013/07/tavares_update/>

<http://warrantless.org/2013/06/ago-response/>

<http://warrantless.org/2013/03/clowncarlaw/>

<http://warrantless.org/2013/01/coakley-analysi/>