

Governor Signs An Act Reforming Alimony in the Commonwealth

On September 26, 2011, Governor Deval Patrick signed [An Act Reforming Alimony in the Commonwealth](#). This effective date of this Act is March 1, 2012. This Act makes significant changes to alimony law in Massachusetts. Among the many important provisions is the phase-in schedule in Section 5 of the Act (pages 6 and 7). You must check Section 5 to determine when you can file a complaint for modification because your existing alimony judgment exceeds the durational limits set forth in this law.

Section 5 provides:

Any complaint for modification filed by a payor pursuant to section 54 of chapter 208 of the General Laws solely because the existing alimony judgment exceeds the durational limits set forth in section 49 of said chapter 208, may only be filed pursuant to the following:

- (1) Payors who were married to the alimony recipient 5 years or less, may file a modification action on or after March 1, 2013.
- (2) Payors who were married to the alimony recipient 10 years or less, but more than 5 years, may file a modification action on or after March 1, 2014.
- (3) Payors who were married to the alimony recipient 15 years or less, but more than 10 years, may file a modification action on or after March 1, 2015.
- (4) Payors who were married to the alimony recipient 20 years or less, but more than 15 years, may file a modification action on or after September 1, 2015.