In Massachusetts, predators have been raping, beating, and robbing the disabled for years. In 1997, the public was shocked by media reports of the torture of two retarded women in a child-care facility in Waltham. Lawmakers issued a scathing critique of the way the state handled these cases.

In 1997, 32 criminal cases were referred to police and prosecutors by the Disabled Persons Protection Commission. By对比，about 70 percent of crimes involving able-bodied victims resulted in arrests for such crimes. It is too soon, however, to determine if convictions will increase.

Last year, a reform plan spearheaded by prosecutors resulted in an increase in verdicts in such crimes. (This story ran on page A1 of the June 10, 2001, edition. © Copyright 2001 Globe Newspaper Company.)