



Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association

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Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association Applauds the Work of the Special Commission on Correctional Funding

BOSTON – On behalf of the fourteen Sheriffs of the Commonwealth, the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association (MSA) looks forward to continuing the conversation regarding the final report and recommendations released by the Special Commission on Correctional Funding on Monday, January 31.

For the past two years, this commission has worked to understand the funding needs of each sheriff's office and the department of corrections. This was a true collaboration that showed the sheriffs, and the department of corrections can work with the commission to improve reporting, create unified metrics, and understand the funding needs to support programming.

The Special Commission on Correctional Funding and the MSA are both working towards similar goals- make the most efficient use of taxpayer money while ensuring the state's correctional structure sets high standards to return people back to the community better than when they were first incarcerated. Bristol County Sheriff Thomas Hodgson, Essex County Sheriff Kevin Coppinger, and retired Sheriff Michael Ashe were honored to be on the commission representing the sheriffs across the state.

"This commission, especially Sen. Brownsberger and Rep. Day, really took the time to drill down through mountains of data to see just how complex the funding piece is in the criminal justice system in Massachusetts," Bristol County Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson said. "This was a collaborative effort from the start between lawmakers, Sheriffs, the DOC and community stakeholders, and will only enhance our best-in-the-nation corrections system for years to come."

"I believe the members of the Commission were impressed by the emphasis each of our 14 sheriffs places on programming, education, treatment, and training as part of the re-entry process. I am confident that the work done in cooperation with the Commission will result in better services for our incarcerated individuals, while continuing to demonstrate great

responsibility to the taxpayers we serve,” Essex County Sheriff Kevin Coppinger said. “While each of our experiences as sheriff is unique, our goal is the same — to help those that come to us receive the treatment, the counseling, the education, and the training they need to become successful citizens in our communities. I believe the recommendations we developed for the Commission support this goal.”

"I appreciate the members of the Special Commission on Correctional Funding coming to the table with an open mind, and taking such an interest in learning about how the sheriffs across the Commonwealth are working to evolve the field of corrections. I also commend Senator Will Brownsberger and Representative Michael Day on their leadership on this commission," said Michael J. Ashe Jr., retired sheriff of Hampden County who served for 42 years as sheriff and also served on the commission. "Their willingness to take a deep dive into this topic will result in better outcomes for the justice-involved people across Massachusetts as well as the taxpayers by ensuring best practices are being implemented across the board. The sheriffs of the Commonwealth have made great strides over the past several years, and this commission and final report has confirmed this."

The sheriffs appreciate having a voice in the discussion and they look forward to continued work with the legislature to ensure Massachusetts is considered a national leader in the field of corrections, much like it is in education and healthcare.

The Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association (MSA) supports, promotes, and advocates for each of the 14 Sheriffs Offices in the Commonwealth. The MSA facilitates cooperative and collaborative relationships among the Sheriffs for the purpose of developing standardized training, providing governance over shared projects, discussing operational best practices, and evaluating research and data on matter of mutual interest and concern. The MSA improves public safety by promoting great understanding of issues impacting Massachusetts Sheriffs and by bringing together law enforcement and criminal justice professionals.