

March 5, 2021

To: Senator Brownsberger & Representative Day, Co-Chairs, Special Commission on Department of Correction and Sheriff's Department Funding

I write to express my concern about the lack of transparency on the part of the Sheriffs of Massachusetts regarding their expenditures and income. This lack of transparency has recently been highlighted by the position taken by the Sheriffs in opposition to An Act Relative to Inmate Telephone Calls (the "No Cost Calls" bill), as explained in the attached Public Testimony that I co-authored with a group of concerned constituents from Middlesex County.

Among the many concerns referenced in this Public Testimony is the unacceptable ratio of corrections staff to incarcerated people, a situation that should be addressed by early retirement and by not replacing staff who retire **as suggested by the Massachusetts Sheriffs Association itself.** (<http://correctionalfunding.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/MSA-Cost-Savings-Measures-FY2018.pdf>) To quote from the MSA's own proposal for Cost Savings Measures:

*"Overtime costs and the ratio of personnel to supervisors could also be addressed more immediately if sheriffs had an option to encourage some of their senior supervisors to retire early and then replacing those officers with entry-level corrections officers. This would favorably affect the ratio of officers to supervisors, reduce total salaries, and provide additional officers to reduce the need for overtime."*

I submit to you this call for sheriffs' accountability in their financial operations and transparency in their financial reporting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Donovan  
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