



Middlesex Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian

400 Mystic Avenue, Medford, MA 02155

office: 781-960-2800 fax: 781-960-2902

www.middlesexsheriff.com

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For more information:

Kevin Maccioli

Public Information Officer

781-960-2805

Sheriff Koutoujian announces support of legislation raising age of juvenile jurisdiction

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian announced his support today for legislation expanding the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system to include 17-year-olds, bringing Massachusetts in line with 39 other states.

Sheriff Koutoujian plans to join colleagues to testify in favor of the legislation (*House 1432 and House 3229*) before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary Wednesday afternoon.

"For me, this is about trying to ensure we give youth caught up in the justice system the best opportunity possible to turn their lives around and become productive members of society," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "This change will lead to increased public safety and taxpayer savings."

Surveys conducted by both the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) have shown higher recidivism rates for those juveniles sent through the adult justice system. The CDC survey, which looked at data gathered through previously conducted research, found youth prosecuted as adults are 34 percent more likely to reoffend than those placed into the juvenile system.

"The statistics tell us the juvenile justice system is the best place to deal with adolescents," said Koutoujian. "This is where the expertise is to intervene with more appropriate correctional, substance abuse and educational services."

Juveniles - beginning at the age of 14 - charged with murder will still automatically be charged as adults, and the state's current Youthful Offender statute can still be used to prosecute juveniles as adults for certain other offenses including those in which a victim is threatened with, or sustains, serious bodily harm.

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