



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex Sheriff's Office

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Sheriff Koutoujian testifies on pretrial reform legislation

BOSTON – Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian testified before the Joint Committee on the Judiciary Tuesday, June 9, addressing legislation focused on pretrial processes in the Commonwealth.

“As we begin an in-depth discussion of criminal justice reform here in the Commonwealth, it is critically important we not only talk about sentencing, but also what happens before individuals go to trial,” said Sheriff Koutoujian.

Testifying on *An Act reforming pretrial process* (Senate Bill 802 and House Bill 1584), Sheriff Koutoujian discussed the results of an analysis of Middlesex’s pretrial population conducted by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). The analysis released in May found the average length of stay for pretrial defendants in the Middlesex Jail increased by almost 24 percent from 2008-2013. During the same period, the average daily population at the jail increased by 30 percent to 772 detainees.

The Sheriff told legislators the NIC report contained several recommendations, including implementing a validated risk assessment tool at arraignment to determine high and low risk defendants, as well as improving data collection to better measure outcomes and identify criminal justice trends – both of which are proposals contained within the legislation filed by Senator Ken Donnelly (D – Arlington) and Representative Tom Sannicandro (D – Ashland).

Sheriff Koutoujian also told legislators he was encouraged to see within the legislation, a call for the creation of a pretrial services division within the Office of the Commissioner of Probation and urged them to provide sufficient resources should the legislation pass.

“For this to be successful, I believe it is crucial that Probation be given the necessary resources to support a pretrial services division,” said Koutoujian.

“I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify today,” said the Sheriff, “and I look forward to working with all stakeholders to strengthen our criminal justice system.”

To learn more about the NIC study of the Middlesex Jail population, please visit <http://goo.gl/qntkID>.

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