



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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**Statement of Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian regarding
minimum mandatory sentences for non-violent drug offenders**

“I applaud Chief Justice Gants for his remarks on minimum mandatory sentences for non-violent drug offenders at today’s MassINC Criminal Justice Reform Coalition Summit. His leadership on this issue will spur a more open and productive dialogue.

At the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office, we work every day to help those in our custody address the factors that led to their incarceration. We provide programming to help them further their education, address their addictions, or acquire new skills in an effort to set them on a better path when they return to their communities. However, those in our custody on minimum mandatory drug sentences are not incentivized to participate in programming because they cannot earn time off their sentence, unlike the vast majority of our inmate population.

Today, there is a growing body of data that suggests evidenced-based drug treatment and diversion programs are most effective. The data includes a January study published by the Vera Institute of Justice which showed the success of diversion programs in reducing recidivism following the elimination of certain minimum mandatory drug sentences in New York. Just as the programming offered in our House of Correction has been proven to help reduce recidivism – further ensuring public safety and saving valuable taxpayer dollars – so can the elimination of minimum mandatory sentences for non-violent drug offenses.”

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