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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**DA CRUZ JOINS STATE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S TO SUPPORT  
RE-ENTRY FUNDS TO FIGHT RECIDIVISM**

**BROCKTON** – Plymouth District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has joined the Massachusetts' District Attorney's Association in voting unanimously to support the \$5 million budget request of Community Resources for Justice for community-based residential re-entry programs designed to decrease recidivism.

The recent study of Massachusetts incarceration conducted by the Council of State Governments found that while the Commonwealth's statistics do not mirror high national mass incarceration numbers, more needs to be accomplished in the area of recidivism. According to data published by The Sentencing Project, Massachusetts' incarceration rate of 179 per 100,000 of population is now 49<sup>th</sup> lowest of the 50 states in overall incarceration, second only to Maine. The rate in Massachusetts is less than half the national average of 458 and less than a quarter of the highest state, Louisiana, at 776.

"Recidivism, not mass incarceration, is the most significant criminal justice reform challenge in this state, and it's a cycle we need to break," DA Cruz said. "When someone becomes involved in the criminal justice system, it may be for many reasons. It is incumbent on us, as prosecutors, to identify those reasons, and then offer alternatives for that person to take a different path in the future. We need to be sure resources are available to assist those individuals down that path. I have seen firsthand that, with the proper support, guidance and given the right tools within our criminal justice system, people can go on to lead independent, productive lives and never look back."

"Furthermore, re-entry services for individuals previously incarcerated at the Department of Corrections and Houses of Correction are of paramount importance. I couldn't be prouder of my office's lengthy partnership with the Plymouth County Sheriff, the United States Attorney's Office, Probation, Parole, local police departments, and

social service providers in the Plymouth County Re-entry Initiative. This initiative is designed to engage individuals incarcerated at the Plymouth County House of Correction prior to their release and offer a broad range of opportunities, including housing, job training and placement, substance abuse support and counseling, and mental health services. When an individual has the desire and drive to rise above circumstances that led to jail, we should commit the necessary resources and funding to assist in that process. When we don't, the criminal justice system fails both the individual and the community as a whole. If someone has the will, we must ensure there is a way."

Norfolk County District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey, president of the Massachusetts District Attorney's Association said, "The low incarceration rate in Massachusetts is not an accident. It is the result of significant hard work by the Legislature, the District Attorneys and other stakeholders in crafting a system that keeps incarceration and crime rates simultaneously low. While those numbers also arguably suggest that the appropriate individuals are being incarcerated, it is clear that we can do more to reduce recidivism."

In 2012, DA Cruz joined his fellow Massachusetts District Attorneys in strongly supporting efforts to reform sentencing for many kinds of drug charges, while increasing the weights that trigger those charges. The District Attorneys balanced this with a push for increased post-sentencing and post-incarceration support and supervision, and implementation of drug courts and diversion programs, as in Plymouth County.

"The District Attorneys have been working directly to address the issue of recidivism for many years," DA Cruz said. "Providing services to people recently released from our state and county prisons has long been a priority. We hope that the Legislature will give serious consideration to this worthy request."

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