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**VETERAN PROSECUTOR CHOSEN TO LEAD PLYMOUTH COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S CONVICTION INTEGRITY UNIT**

BROCKTON – Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has named a veteran prosecutor to lead the Office's Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU), established to investigate claims of wrongful conviction or actual innocence.

DA Cruz, who is a member of the statewide Massachusetts Conviction Integrity Working Group, today announced that the Plymouth CIU will be led by Assistant District Attorney Richard Linehan, who most recently served as the Chief of District Courts for the office. Linehan was a criminal defense attorney for 12 years before joining the DA's Office, where he has been an ADA for more than 17 years.

The CIU is dedicated to investigating and recommending necessary action in cases in which a claim of wrongful conviction or actual innocence has been brought to the attention of the District Attorney. When an erroneous conviction occurs, the District Attorney is often the right person and the only person, who can take remedial action for the defendant and the community.

"I am committed to the pursuit of justice in all cases for defendants, victims of crimes, and the community," DA Cruz said. "This CIU serves to ensure the fairness and integrity that is crucial to the community's trust in the criminal justice system."

The CIU carefully reviews claims of innocence or wrongful conviction, whether due to newly discovered evidence, such as cutting edge DNA testing, mistaken identification, or even mistakes by the court, civilian witnesses, forensic experts, defense counsel, prosecutors or the police. Such reviews are undertaken as cooperative efforts with defendants and defense counsel, in the pursuit of justice.

Most recently, Linehan handled the DA Office's review of claims of scientific error both in the drug lab scandal, and problematic claims with the Draeger roadside breath tests.

“Rick was a natural fit to lead this unit,” DA Cruz said. “With his background in criminal defense work, he will be able to examine claims of wrongful conviction with a fair and unprejudiced eye. Given his extensive experience with significant, high-profile cases and difficult complex science issues, Rick is the ideal person for this critical role.”

Claims of innocence and wrongful conviction can be submitted at this link on our website for further review: **PlymouthDA.ConvictionIntegrity@State.MA.US**.