

Questionnaire for 2016 Mass. candidates for sheriff

Candidate: Please answer these questions in whatever format is most convenient for you. You can insert your answers in this document electronically and e-mail it back to [name of group] at [email address] OR you can mail a hard copy to [mailing address]. However, please note that on page 3, we ask you to **sign and date** your responses to ensure their authenticity. If you respond to the questionnaire by e-mail, please either 1) scan the signature page and e-mail it to us, or 2) send a hard copy by mail. Finally, please respond by [date].

1. **What is your corrections philosophy?** I believe that the primary responsibility of corrections within the criminal justice system is to produce correction.

Because of the many advances of modern day corrections, coupled with the protections of the this country's Constitution, criminal offenders are detained or sentenced to specific terms of confinement as a punishment and not for punishment for their criminal offenses. Therefore, I believe that correction happens once an offender is challenged to change by participating in evidence-based programming that address specific criminal thinking and other socially unacceptable behavioral factors.

2. **What are your qualifications for being sheriff of your county?** In addition to my strength of character, conviction and administrative skill, I am in my 25th year of service within the Hampden County Sheriff's Department and Correctional Center. I have earned a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Westfield State University and serve this sheriff's department as Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Programs with supervision of Vocational Programs, Religious Services, Student Interns, Volunteers, Specialized Programs of Anger Management and Domestic Violence Education. My knowledge of modern penology and criminal justice theory has helped me to manage and maintain successful operational efficiencies and annual reports

that highlight a successful student retention ratio in the 90 percentile since 1999. Last year, my successful student retention ratio was 97.6%.

3. **[For candidates other than current sheriff] What policies of the former/current sheriff would you change and why?** I would change the current inmate classification system, transitional program schedule, individual service plan, staff fitness tests, staff career plan/track, staff promotional process for greater transparency. Furthermore, I would add a post-release supervision, front-end diversions, increase the use of the electronic monitoring program, etc. I believe that these, in addition to several other visionary measures for the next six years will help to raise the current staff morale and reduce offender recidivism rates.
4. **What are your views on building a new county House of Correction (HOC) or jail? Expanding the existing HOC or jail?** I do not believe that there is a need for building a new House of Correction or Jail at this current time. However, I do believe that this county's correctional center has need of a Mental Health Unit for detainees that clearly present their need of psychological care and not necessarily incarceration. I could accomplish this by refurbishing and repurposing a building that is currently under the control of the sheriff's department in the community.
5. **Your views on transparency: If elected/re-elected, will you issue annual reports that include information on public accreditation findings, Prison Rape Elimination Act audits, suicides and lawsuits against the sheriff's department (whether filed by prisoners, employees, attorneys or family members)?** Yes. I have stated publicly that as Sheriff, I will produce and publish a County Corrections Report that will be made public on a quarterly basis which will disclose transparency of our records for the above categories of concern along with specific financial information.
6. **Impact of legislation or statewide administrative policies:**
 - a. **Do you support legislation or policy changes that could result in fewer people sentenced to incarceration at your county HOC? If so, please give examples.** Yes. I will work with our local legislative delegation and support any policy or legislation that seeks to reduce mandatory minimum sentencing or mass incarceration guidelines designed to over-incarcerate minority groups, the poor, substance addicted, etc.

- b. **Do you support legislation or policy changes that could result in fewer people held pre-trial at your county jail? If so, please give examples.**
Yes. I will work with our police and judicial officials throughout Hampden County to develop policies that will provide an opportunity for speedy trials for all pre-trial detainees, help to reduce detention bails and increase front-end diversionary measures.
- c. **Do you support legislation or policy changes that could result in more people sentenced to incarceration at your county HOC? If so, please give examples.** I believe that incarceration should be reserved for the most serious and violent offenders within our county. Therefore, I am willing to support legislation or policy changes that will support "Truth In Sentencing" laws and guidelines at federal, state and county levels.
- d. **Do you support legislation or policy changes that could result in more people held pre-trial at your county jail? If so, please give examples.**
No, not exactly. I would like to increase the utilization of our department's electronic monitoring/ankle bracelet program due to it's success ratio last year being in the mid to upper 80 percentile. Pre-Trial detention should also be reserved for the most serious and violent offenders.

7. **For people who have not been convicted of any offense, do you think it is appropriate to lock them up for drug or alcohol treatment at a county HOC, instead of being sent to a community-based healthcare facility? Why or why not?**
I believe that any person held in custody that has not been convicted of a crime, but is detained because of a drug or alcohol related offense, should be mandated to complete a drug or alcohol treatment program in lieu of being incarcerated. However, if a person has committed a crime because of or induced by drugs or alcohol, I believe that the person should be incarcerated according to the governing charge and also be required to complete a mandatory Substance Abuse Program while in custody at our correctional center.

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8. **Your views on the basics of incarceration:**

- a. **How do you think pre-trial and sentenced prisoners should primarily spend their time?** I believe that both classifications of in-custody detainees should spend their time participating in programs that are proven to increase offender accountability for one's actions, victim impact awareness, mindfulness, recovery from personal trauma, identifying and reducing addictive and compulsive behavior, high school/college education classes,

vocational/employability skills training, anger management, violence prevention, conflict resolution, parenting classes, etc.

- b. What educational opportunities currently exist at your county HOC? At the jail? Are there waiting lists to participate? Do you support increasing or decreasing those opportunities?** We currently have HiSet/GED, ESOL and College classes available for offender participation at both the Jail and HOC. I totally support increasing these programs. There are pending enrollment lists.
 - c. What employment/job training opportunities exist at your county HOC? At the jail? Are there waiting lists to participate? Do you support increasing or decreasing those opportunities?** We currently have Vocational Skills Training, Employability & Retention and institutional work assignments available for offender participation at both the Jail and HOC. I totally support increasing these programs. There are pending enrollment lists.
 - d. What mental health/substance use disorder services exist at your county HOC? At the jail? Are there waiting lists to participate? Do you support increasing or decreasing those services?** We currently have Mental/Emotional Health and Substance Abuse & Use programs available for offender participation at both the Jail and HOC. I totally support increasing these programs. There are pending enrollment lists.
 - e. What personal growth programs (parenting, anti-violence, etc.) exist at your county HOC? At the jail? Are there waiting lists to participate? Do you support increasing or decreasing these opportunities?** We currently have Anger Management, Domestic Violence, Victim Impact, Violence Prevention and Emotional Health programs available for offender participation at both the Jail and HOC. I totally support increasing these programs. There are pending enrollment lists.
- 9. What are your views on isolating prisoners (sometimes called solitary confinement) as punishment for violating HOC/jail rules?** Most criminal offenders are held in custody due to a violation of societal rules. Once confined, each offender is made aware of facility rules and expected to observe them. However, upon violation of known facility rules, offenders may be placed under in-house disciplinary detention, with solitary confinement being reserved for the most serious of rule violation. All restrictive housing confinements are measured according to a gradation of guilt sanction and designed to return the offender to general population housing as soon as possible. I support our current policy and practice for the utilization of the same.

10. Your views on re-entry and recidivism:

- a. **If elected/re-elected, how would you ensure that prisoners leaving your county HOC have the best chance for successfully returning to their communities?** I believe that involving a member of the offender's family at the beginning of the sentence or pre-trial detention period, in addition to evidence-based programming and appropriate supportive wrap-around and post-release services will greatly help to improve an offender's crime-free lifestyle after release and thereby improve recidivism ratios.
- b. **What is the current rate of recidivism for prisoners leaving your county HOC? What would you do to reduce that rate?** The current rate of recidivism in Hampden County is 33.5%, compared to last year's rate of 36.5%. As Sheriff, I would first require that our measurement of recidivism is accurate, truthful and not skewed to reflect a lesser number. Secondly, I would institute a mandatory post-release supervision policy for all offenders that would utilize members of my Honorary Deputy Sheriff's Association to enhance ex-offender re-entry success.

11. Your views on incarcerated women: I believe that women are beginning to be incarcerated at a faster rate than men. Because women tend to be the nurturers of their children, women that are not deemed to be serious or violent offenders should be considered for up-front diversionary sentencing or in-home confinement. Women tend to have far more traumatizing experiences that may have contributed to their victimization and complexities of incarceration. I believe that incarcerated women receive less rehabilitative services than those of incarcerated men. As Sheriff, one of my priorities will be to ensure that women are receiving the same quality and quantity of programs and services that are normally made available to men.

- a. **Should gender-specific medical care and education be provided?** Although this is a controversial topic for many that was in practice before the 19th century, I believe that it is helpful to provide gender-specific medical care and education in a correctional setting.
- b. **Should women be forced to buy their own feminine hygiene products or should the HOC/jail provide them?** No, I do not believe that in-custody women should be forced to buy their own feminine hygiene products in a correctional setting.

c. **Should the HOC/jail promote or facilitate meaningful contact with a woman's children? If so, how?** Yes. By continuing to offer and develop 'Mother-Child' and other programs of similar cognitive value that help to promote positive parenting skills and bonding between mothers and their children.

12. **Your views on pregnant/post-partum women prisoners:** I believe that being incarcerated can be a very traumatizing and grievous experience for anyone. However, this experience can become more horrific for pregnant/post-partum women. Therefore, I totally support a special care for in-custody pregnant women with a prioritized concern for the health of her unborn child.

a. **Are you familiar with the 2014 legislation on pregnant and post-partum prisoners (M.G.L. chapter 127, section 118)?** Yes I am.

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b. **Is your county HOC/jail in compliance with that law?** Yes, to my knowledge.

c. **Do you support House bill, H.3679, "An Act to Ensure Compliance with the Anti-Shackling Law for Pregnant Incarcerated Women"?** Yes, without question.

13. **What are your views on videotaping strip searches of prisoners?** It is my experience that there are times when the videotaping of prisoners is necessary to ensure the safety of the correctional staff and prisoner or detainee. The practice of video taping may at times be utilized during a move to a segregation housing unit or during a strip search process. The strip search procedure is embarrassing enough for anyone before a stranger. But adding a video camera, operated by a member of the opposite sex, takes the experience to a level that is demoralizing, humiliating, unconscionable and fundamentally wrong in any setting. But whenever and if the videotaping of a strip search is necessary, I firmly believe that it should be done respectfully, quickly and with correctional staff of the same sex as the in-custody prisoner or detainee.

14. **If you are now or were previously employed as a corrections or law enforcement officer, has a complaint or lawsuit ever been filed against you for excessive force, a civil rights violation, discrimination, or abuse of your authority? If so, please provide details and the outcome of the complaint/lawsuit.** No, I have not had any complaints or lawsuits filed against me as a corrections or law enforcement officer for the past 25 years of my service.

Thank you for participating in our candidate's questionnaire!

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AUTHORIZATION

This signature attests that the above questionnaire answers accurately represent the views of the candidate.

Candidate's Signature

Date

Candidate's name: print or type: _____

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