The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

DOC and Norfolk DA sign agreement on correction officer safety and inmate civil rights

District Attorney William R. Keating, left, and Corrections Commissioner Harold W. Clarke sign the agreement in Keating's Office.

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Norfolk District Attorney William R. Keating and officials from the Department of Corrections today, Wednesday, August 20, 2008, signed an agreement formalizing how all crimes inside the state prisons in Walpole and Norfolk will be investigated to protect the rights of inmate and DOC victims.

“From the Corrections Officer's standpoint, there has been a real concern that assaults made on them by inmates are downplayed as just being part of the job,” District Attorney Keating said. “And there has been a concern raised by inmates and organizations that advocate for the civil rights of inmates that assaults against them have been treated differently because of their status as inmates.”

The Memorandum of Understanding (attached) formalizes, in writing, exactly how all cases will be investigated, when those investigations will be handled by outside authorities to avoid any accusations of conflict, and creates a template and a framework that Keating hopes will remain in place for future District Attorneys and DOC leadership.

“This formalizes, for the first time, how investigation and criminal prosecution of crimes committed inside DOC facilities will be used to protect the men and women that society relies on to run correctional facilities, and protect the civil rights of the incarcerated,” District Attorney Keating said. “We are very pleased to have the partnership of Commissioner Harold W. Clarke and his staff to make this happen.”

Any and all defendants mentioned are legally innocent until proven guilty.