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**DeNUCCI SAYS OUTDATED CRIMINAL HISTORY SYSTEM
POSES THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY**

State Auditor Joe DeNucci reported today that the state's outdated computerized criminal justice information system is preventing law enforcement agencies from getting up-to-date information on criminal records.

In an audit of the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB), DeNucci said the 25-year-old system lacks the technology to reconcile arrests with court dispositions or use fingerprints to verify criminal history record information.

The CHSB is responsible for maintaining Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and other data for use by law enforcement and criminal justice agencies in Massachusetts and across the country. In addition to criminal records, the system contains information on missing and wanted person files, drivers' license and motor vehicle information, and firearms licensing.

DeNucci said that without up-to-date technology to ensure the accuracy and efficiency of criminal record information, Massachusetts cannot guarantee the reliability of law enforcement decisions that depend on this information. Among the problems cited in DeNucci's audit:

- Individuals convicted of serious criminal acts do not always have their criminal record updated to reflect these convictions. Audit testing found over 38,000 cases in which convictions were not identified in the system. These included felony charges ranging from murder to failure to register as a sex offender.
- There is no link between the arrest data submitted to the State Police and the disposition data entered in by the courts. As a result, CHSB cannot ensure that all court adjudications are received, recorded and processed in a timely manner in order to maintain an accurate criminal record for an individual.
- Massachusetts is one of only two states that do not use fingerprints to verify and support criminal record information. This can allow criminal charges to be entered into the system for the wrong person, either by an unintentional error or intentionally if an offender gives a false name and date of birth.

"These are serious public safety concerns that must be addressed by the Commonwealth," said DeNucci.

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DeNucci's audit also disclosed that the criminal information system cannot adequately identify all users to ensure only authorized access with a legitimate work purpose as required by law. The audit found that certain users were accessing the system without proper authentication and that inquiries were not sufficiently monitored, creating the potential for illegal or unethical activities.

For example, audit testing found that hundreds of queries or "hits" were made on the names of selected famous Massachusetts people accessed through the system, apparently without work-related justification. DeNucci said disclosure of personal or criminal record information must be limited only to authorized queries, not arbitrary searches of high-profile citizens.

DeNucci said a major reason for CHSB's outdated technology has been a lack of funding. However, CHSB has received funding from an IT bond and says it is in the process of selecting a vendor to begin modernizing the criminal history system. The board expects the overhaul to be completed within two years.

The audit was conducted at the request of the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

"I am deeply concerned that the lack of a modern, state-of-the-art criminal history information system could pose a threat to public safety," said DeNucci. "I am fully aware of the Commonwealth's fiscal problems, but effective law enforcement must be a top priority. I hope these serious issues are addressed in the near future."