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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

AUDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

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July 16, 2020

House Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon Street
Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

House Committee on the Judiciary
24 Beacon Street
Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Legislative Colleagues,

As you strive to create a police accountability system in the Commonwealth, I ask that you keep the underlying training needs at the forefront of these efforts. As you know, this is an area in which my office has done significant work in recent months. Many of the recommendations from our report, *Municipal Police In-Service Training: Funding and Cooperation across the Commonwealth*, provide specific steps the Legislature can take to enhance and improve police training and accountability.

I am encouraged that the Governor and the Senate have taken a significant step toward improved police accountability in defining the POSAC (Police Officer Standards and Certification) system. As Massachusetts is one of four states that does not have a police licensure and certification process, I recommended the Legislature establish such a system. However, proper implementation of the POSAC depends on robust training requirements, adequate funding and enhanced cooperation between the state and municipalities.

In our report, we relayed feedback from police chiefs that pointed to a lack of curriculum diversity, limited course sections and course capacity, a shortage of training instructors, and inadequate funding and facilities as primary reasons the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) is not meeting the training needs of municipal police departments. Additionally, there is

no comprehensive central database of completed in-service officer training courses and hours and little oversight as to who gets what training as mandated by law. To address these problems and improve police training and accountability, I ask that you give particular focus to the following items included in the Senate bill (S. 2820):

- Requiring local police departments to enter training they provide or secure for officers into the training database maintained by the MPTC;
- Requiring the MPTC to provide annual financial reporting to the Secretary of Administration & Finance, the Legislature, and my office;
- Establishing a requirement for a strategic plan by the MPTC so its stakeholders, including the Legislature are clear on what it will accomplish to further goals of accountability and standards; and
- Requiring periodic reviews of the training curriculum provided by the MPTC, including hearing from criminal justice experts outside of law enforcement.

In taking these steps, the Legislature will help the MPTC accomplish its mission and meet the training needs of municipalities.

I thank you for your consideration of these recommendations, and more importantly, for your commitment to this issue. As always, my office stands ready as a resource to you as you tackle this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. M. Bump", written in a cursive style.

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth