



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Middlesex Sheriff's Office
Peter J. Koutoujian
Sheriff

400 Mystic Avenue, 4th Floor
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

Phone (781) 960-2800
Fax (781) 960-2902

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Contact

Kevin Maccioli
Public Information Officer (MSO)
781-960-2805

Representative Gordon, Chief Bongiorno join Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission

State Representative Kenneth I Gordon (D – 21st Middlesex) and Bedford Police Chief Robert Bongiorno, Jr. have officially been named to a commission tasked in part with breaking the cycle of arrest and incarceration for those with mental health and/or substance use disorders in Middlesex County.

The Massachusetts Legislature established the 11-member Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission in 2018 to develop a plan for creating a restoration center in Middlesex County. The center would help expand community capacity for treatment while supporting law enforcement diversionary efforts.

Co-chaired by Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and President and CEO of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health Dr. Danna Mauch, the commission includes State Senator Cindy Friedman (D – Fourth Middlesex), and representatives of the judiciary, as well as public and behavioral health stakeholders.

"Rep. Gordon and Chief Bongiorno bring valuable insight and experience to this process," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "Their voices will be critical as we seek to break the cycle of incarceration and produce better outcomes for those in our communities with mental health and substance use disorders."

"Representative Gordon and Chief Bongiorno share a leadership track record in addressing the special needs of persons with behavioral health conditions through community stakeholder engagement and targeted program initiatives," said Dr. Mauch. "Their contributions will be instrumental in crafting feasible solutions to the problem of overrepresentation of people with these conditions in our jails."

Rep. Gordon "I'm thrilled that Chief Bongiorno and Rep. Gordon have joined the Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission," said Senator Friedman. "Their background and experience will provide valuable insight to our commission and will help us in our continued effort to establish a restoration

center to improve the lives of those with behavioral health needs and reduce unnecessary incarceration throughout the county.”

“It is an honor and a tremendously valuable experience to contribute to this worthy commission and to work with Chief Bongiorno who adds an important voice in representing the law enforcement community,” said Rep. Gordon.

“I am proud to stand with Rep. Gordon, Sheriff Koutoujian, Dr. Mauch, Sen. Friedman and all the Commission members as we come together to break the cycle of arrest and incarceration for those with mental health and substance use disorders,” said Chief Bongiorno. “Middlesex County has long been at the forefront of restorative justice and progressive policies that have helped repair the breach to the community caused by crime while doing more with offenders than locking them up and throwing away the keys. I am excited to be part of the Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission and look forward to seeing the fruits of our labor.”

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