



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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**COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC COUNSEL SERVICES REFUTES
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS' OURAGEOUS ASSERTIONS
REGARDING SUPPOSED FUNDING "DISPARITY" BETWEEN
PROSECUTION AND DEFENSE**

Desperate times may call for desperate measures, but when it comes to the state's budget, desperation is no excuse for distorting facts and misleading public policy makers. Unfortunately, the taxpayer funded Massachusetts District Attorneys Association (MDAA) is now employing such tactics. In an effort to increase the budget of each of the Commonwealth's 11 District Attorneys, it has resorted to using inadequate data and distorted comparisons in an attempt to embarrass state elected officials prior to the November 2nd general election.

On October 7, the MDAA contacted legislators and demanded their support to gut the defense of the poor in the state's criminal justice system--apparently without regard for our state and federal constitutions. In its demand, the MDAA relied on misinformation to falsely claim that the constitutionally and legally mandated defense of Massachusetts' poorest citizens costs more than prosecution and law enforcement.

This is simply false. In fact, the MDAA grossly understated the actual amount of money allocated to the prosecution of criminal cases and conveniently omitted the numerous financial resources at the District Attorneys' fingertips utilized on a daily basis. Rather than attempt to intimidate and appropriate by force funds properly allocated to protecting the rights of the Commonwealth's poorest citizens, the MDAA should answer these noticeably unanswered questions:

- More-

- Why does the MDAA ignore the true cost of prosecuting cases?
 - The MDAA fails to mention the \$1.4 billion spent on local police. Even if only 30% of local police budgets is devoted to the prosecution of cases, that is \$420 million in government prosecution resources that the Association conveniently ignores. As a result, the Association has acknowledged less than 18% of the true cost of prosecution.
 - \$273.4 million spent on the State Police, a portion of which is devoted to the prosecution of cases and special detective units assigned to each District Attorney's office.
- Why does the MDAA not disclose additional prosecution spending that also occurs in the following areas?
 - \$7.9 million spent on the Chief Medical Examiner
 - \$13.8 million spent on the State Crime Lab
- Why does the Association not reveal the costs of other resources available to them including:
 - Regional crime labs
 - Drug forfeiture funds
 - Federal grant funds earmarked for state law enforcement every year
 - The Office of the Attorney General
 - The Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - State and federal multiagency task forces
 - Free office space in the numerous courts of the Commonwealth

Instead of submitting to the demands of the MDAA, the Legislature should require answers to these questions as well as a full accounting of all resources available to each District Attorney's office to uncover how they are allocated.

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