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**PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION OUTLINES PLAN FOR ACCOUNTABLE, EFFECTIVE RE-ENTRY AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION PROGRAM**

BOSTON - Tuesday, January 25, 2011 - The Patrick-Murray Administration today outlined its vision for a comprehensive re-entry and community supervision program within the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The proposal builds on the Administration's efforts to ensure accountability and efficiency in state government, by aligning agencies with shared goals and reforming the Commonwealth's sentencing laws.

The proposal, to be included in legislation that will be filed in the coming weeks, will include the consolidation of the parole and probation departments into one new executive branch agency, the Department of Re-entry and Community Supervision. This unified system would save the state \$14 million dollars in the first year, while continuing to ensure public safety in communities across the Commonwealth.

"We need an effective and accountable re-entry program for those leaving the criminal justice system," said Governor Deval Patrick. "Combining probation and parole, and requiring supervision after release, takes the best practices from other states to assure both public safety and cost savings."

The savings will be reflected in the Governor's budget proposal to be filed tomorrow.

"A new streamlined approach to parole and probation makes sense," said Secretary of Public Safety Mary Beth Heffernan. "The proposed Department of Re-Entry and Community Supervision would coordinate parole and probation services into the most comprehensive and cost-efficient system, providing accountability for offenders and improving public safety in Massachusetts."

The Governor plans to file legislation consolidating parole and probation following a report on the work of the bi-partisan Probation Reform Working Group. The bill will include any consensus recommendations the group makes.

The unified Department of Re-entry and Community Supervision would oversee all forms of community supervision, from defendants in early pretrial stages of the criminal process, to inmates released after incarceration. A unified system would ensure accountability in the parole and probation departments and help restore public confidence in this vital component of the Commonwealth's criminal justice system.

The new agency would ensure greater oversight of the supervision process, from cases requiring comprehensive supervision, ranging from daily meetings with parole or probation officers to electronic monitoring anklets, to cases where less restrictive supervision is best suited to the individual's risks and needs.

First-time and low-risk offenders would continue to be supervised in the community as an alternative to incarceration. Higher-risk offenders, sentenced to serve terms in county or state correctional facilities, will no longer be able to return to the community without any supervision. These individuals would either earn parole or serve their maximum sentence and then be released with a mandatory period of supervision and, where appropriate, treatment.

As part of the Administration's comprehensive plan for re-entry and community supervision, Governor Patrick will also file legislation eliminating mandatory minimum sentencing for drug offenses that do not involve guns or children, returning sentencing discretion to the judiciary. Prisoners currently serving mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses, who were not convicted of crimes of violence, did not possess a gun, and did not target children, will become eligible for parole after serving one half of their maximum term. The legislation retains mandatory minimum sentencing for the most dangerous drug offenders: those who use a gun in connection with the crime and those who exploit children.

Additionally, the Administration's plan provides vital tools for reducing recidivism and managing overcrowded prisons by requiring supervised release for all state prison inmates after they serve their sentence, and permitting the movement of inmates, as

appropriate, to lower levels of security, work release and community supervision.

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