FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 28, 2015

CONTACT
Elizabeth Guyton
elizabeth.guyton@state.ma.us

State Leaders Announce Working Group for Review of Criminal Justice System

BOSTON – State leaders today serving as the Steering Committee for an independent review of Massachusetts criminal justice system, formally announced a 25-member bipartisan Working Group to partner with the Council of State Government’s (CSG) Justice Center to explore opportunities for policy consensus and reform.

The multi-branch task force’s Steering Committee, consisting of Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Senate President Stan Rosenberg, House Speaker Robert DeLeo and Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Ralph Gants, will provide guidance, oversight and strategic direction in the development of policy options throughout the review process.

“This group of distinguished individuals with backgrounds in criminal justice and law enforcement will serve the Commonwealth well in our endeavor with the Council of State Governments to further reform and improve the judicial process, and reduce recidivism and incarceration rates,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Massachusetts strengths in these areas and wealth of ideas and experienced individuals, will ensure we continue to lead on criminal justice reform, public safety and reentry programming, while maintaining one of the lowest incarceration rates in the nation.”

“The expertise and experience of the members of the justice reinvestment working
group will provide valuable insight and knowledge to the Council on State Governments as they review the Massachusetts criminal justice system," said Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst). “Through collaboration between the working group and CSG, we will identify policies for Massachusetts to make smart reforms to reduce recidivism rates, lower costs, and invest in re-entry programs. We can be tough on crime and smart on crime.”

“The working group represents diverse perspectives who will bring meaningful experience and insight to this process,” said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo. “By using a data-driven analysis, with the input of the appointees, we will ensure that our policies help reduce recidivism and incarceration rates, are cost-effective and are structured in a way that best serves the citizens of the Commonwealth.”

"I welcome the Council of State Government’s independent review of the data that will inform our collaborative efforts to reduce the rate of recidivism, promote individualized sentencing, and diminish over-incarceration," said Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Ralph D. Gants. “Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey, Probation Commissioner Ed Dolan, Superior Court Chief Justice Judith Fabricant, District Court Chief Justice Paul Dawley and Boston Municipal Court Judge John McDonald will work with our partners from other branches and agencies of government and CSG on a data-driven approach to criminal justice reform."

In an August letter to the Council of State Governments Justice Center, these leaders requested technical assistance from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative to “use a data-driven approach to continue to improve criminal justice outcomes,” while noting their desire to work with the Initiative to build on Massachusetts overall decline in incarceration dates over the last decade in order to further reduce recidivism rates, prison populations and taxpayer costs while enhancing public safety.

The Working Group members, consisting of Executive, Legislative and Judicial co-chairs, and executive, legislative, judicial, law enforcement, parole and probation and legal services representatives, will work directly with the Justice Center throughout the project on their findings.

**Massachusetts Criminal Justice Review -- Steering Committee**

Governor Charlie Baker

Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Senate President Stan Rosenberg
House Speaker Robert DeLeo

Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court Ralph Gants

**Working Group – Leadership and Members**

Lon Povich, Governor’s Chief Legal Counsel
   *Executive Co-Chair*

State Senator William Brownsberger
   *Legislative Co-Chair*

State Representative John Fernandes
   *Legislative Co-Chair*

Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey
   *Judiciary Co-Chair*

**Anthony Benedetti**, Committee for Public Counsel Services Chief Counsel

**Daniel Bennett**, Secretary of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)

**Frank Cousins**, Essex County Sheriff

**Cynthia Creem**, State Senator

**Paul Dawley**, District Court Chief Justice

**Ed Dolan**, Probation Commissioner

**Judith Fabricant**, Superior Court Chief Justice

**James Hicks**, Natick Chief of Police

**Randy Hunt**, State Representative

**Peter Koutoujian**, Middlesex County Sheriff

**Christopher Markey**, State Representative

**John McDonald**, East Boston Municipal Court First Justice
Joseph McDonald, Plymouth County Sheriff

Carol Mici, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Classification, Programs and Reentry

Michael O’Keefe, Cape and Islands District Attorney

Colin Owyang, Deputy Attorney General

Debra Pinals, Associate Commissioner of Forensic Mental Health Services

Jennifer Queally, Undersecretary for Law Enforcement (EOPSS)

Daniel Racine, Fall River Chief of Police

Paul Treseler, Chairman of the Parole Board

Leslie Walker, Prisoners’ Legal Services Executive Director

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center has helped 21 states apply the Justice Reinvestment approach, in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance. Justice Reinvestment is an analysis-based process of identifying wasteful spending and ways to reduce incarceration rates, while applying those savings towards reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety.

# # #