

# **MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF COURT OFFICERS**

**NAGE -National Association of Government Employees**

Date: July 31, 2018

Attn: Director of Security Jeffrey Morrow

The Union believes that Court Officers are at a huge disadvantage with the lack of any tools, other than their hands or bodies, to gain control over an individual. This often puts the officers and/or subject at a risk of physical injury. Violence in courthouses is very prevalent, the Courthouses themselves are filled with people who have committed crimes against individuals and society. These individuals can become explosive at any time. It is not surprising that courthouse violence has been trending upward.

The risks involved with security operations are great, wide ranging and can never be eliminated. However, with the use of a less-lethal weapon such as OC spray they can be minimized. The use of less-lethal weapons can be particularly useful in a courthouse setting when dealing with subjects who have mental illness or are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Court Officers deal with some extremely violent individuals whose liberties are being taken away or who already are in custody.

Even though the union is in full support of arming Court Officers, I believe that as Union President I am responsible to make sure that our officers are equipped with the appropriate tools and training to be able to perform their job duties as required by the Trial Court. The use of less-lethal weapons will provide us with the ability to gain control over a subject or situation. OC spray was among the first of the less-lethal weapons to be adopted by law enforcement officers and most recently the use of Tasers has become extremely useful in violent situations that officers are encountering.

At present time, the Massachusetts Trial Court Security Department is one of the only states that does not equip their officers with any tools. With the increase in violence in courthouses over the years, there has been no movement to provide our Court Officers with proper equipment and training for their protection and the protection of court staff and the public. Based on the information that I have provided above, the Union is in full support of each Court Officer carrying OC on their person. The Unions and Trial Court's main goal should be to reduce the amount of injuries officers face going hands on with the violent individuals they encounter daily. We would also like to continue the discussions regarding Tasers and Firearms for the Security Department of the Massachusetts Trial Court. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 774-644-0386. I thank you for your attention in this matter

Sincerely,

ACCO Dorianna Medeiros,

President of MAC

