

NOVEMBER 2025

THE OFFICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF MASSCOP

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I want to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for all that you do.

Your dedication, professionalism, and commitment to serving your communities make a meaningful difference each and every day.

During this season of thanks, I hope you take pride in knowing that your efforts have a lasting impact on both our profession and the communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued dedication and for the positive impact you create.

Scott A. Hovsepian

Scott A. Hovsepian



WELCOME TO OUR NEW LOCALS

Medway Police Union -Local 525

Becket Police Union - Local 526

Easton Police Patrol Union - Local 528

S



To: Massachusetts Coalition of Police Membership
From: Massachusetts Coalition of Police Vice President John Nelson
Subject: November Legislative Update
Date: November 25, 2025

The 2025-2026 legislative session is well underway, and the Massachusetts Coalition of Police Legislative Team has been working tirelessly to advocate for our members and all law enforcement at the State House. As previously noted, we have filed a number of bills in this session, and we want to highlight some of them for you. This list is only a portion of the bills we have filed or are following:

HB-1828/SB1039 An Act Relative to Due Process filed by Rep. Lawn, Sen. Collins, and Sen. Oliveira. These bills were heard and are in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

HB-2717 An Act Relative to membership on the POST Commission filed by Rep. Turco. This bill was heard and is in the Joint Committee on Public Safety.

HB-2718 An Act Relative to Labor Participating on the POST Commission filed by Rep. Turco. This bill was heard and is in the Joint Committee on Public Safety.

SB-1802 An Act providing for a COVID-19 retirement credit to essential public health and safety employees filed by Sen. Collins. This bill was heard in the Joint Committee on Public Service. The bill was voted out favorably and is now in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB-3003 An Act Relative to a COVID-19 retirement study filed by Rep. Zlotnik. This bill was heard in the Joint Committee on Public Service. This bill was voted out favorably and is now in the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2909/SB-1821 An Act Relative to the disability or death caused by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) filed by Rep. McGonagle and Sen. DiDomencio. These bills were heard in the Joint Committee on Public Service. These bills were voted out favorably and are now in the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2846/SB-1797 An Act Relative to disability or death caused by contagious disease; presumption filed by Rep. Giannino and Sen. Collins. These bills were heard in the Joint Committee on Public Service. These bills were voted out favorably and are now in the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2845 An Act Relative to accrued leave while awaiting a determination of 111F filed by Rep. Giannino. This bill was heard on the Joint Committee on Public Service. This bill was voted out favorably and is now in the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2621 An Act Relative to Critical Incident Leave filed by Rep. Giannino. This bill was heard and is in the Joint Committee on Public Safety.

HB-2850/SB-1877 An Act Relative to the cancer presumption for Police Officers filed by Rep. Giannino and Sen. Lovely. These bills were heard and are in the Joint Committee on Public Service.

SB-1730 An Act to strengthen critical incident stress management for emergency service providers filed by Sen. Montigny. This bill was heard and is in the Joint Committee on Public Safety.

HB-2966 An Act Relative to capping earnings in retirement filed by Rep. Silvia. This bill was heard and is in the Joint Committee on Public Service.

HB-3811/SB-2449 An Act establishing the Blue Star License Plate filed by Rep. Walsh and Sen. Tarr. These bills were heard in the Joint Committee on Transportation. SB-2449 was voted out favorably and is now in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2993/SB-1910 An Act providing the next of kin of a Police Officer or Firefighter killed in the line of duty with the flags of the Commonwealth and the United States filed by Rep. Walsh and Sen. Tarr. These bills were heard in the Joint Committee on Public Service. These bills were voted out favorably and are now in the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2728 An Act establishing the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Memorial Fund filed by Rep. Walsh. This bill was heard and is in the Joint Committee on Public Safety.

SB-1934 An Act Relative to funding of the Massachusetts State House Police Memorial filed by Sen. Collins. This bill was heard in the Joint Committee on Revenue; this bill was voted out favorably and is now in the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2729/SB-1772 An Act Relative to implementing a Blue Alert System in the Commonwealth filed by Rep. Walsh and Sen. Tarr. These bills were heard in the Joint Committee on Public Safety. HB-2729 was voted out favorably and is now in the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB-2885/SB1827 An Act Relative to Public Safety Dispatchers filed by Rep. Kilcoyne and Sen. Driscoll. These bills were heard and are in the Joint Committee on Public Service.

HB-2662/HB-2629 An Act Relative to critical incident intervention by emergency service providers filed by Rep. MacGregor and Rep. Hawkins. These bills were heard and are in the Joint Committee on Public Safety.

HB-2663 An Act Relative to the internal benefits of public safety telecommunicators filed by Rep.MacGregor. This bill was heard in the Joint Committee on Public Safety. This bill was voted out favourably and is now in the House Ways and Means Committee.

The Massachusetts Coalition of Police legislative team will continue to advocate for you every single day at the State House, along with the many state agencies. We have developed great relationships with so many people in the executive branch and legislative branches. We always want our members involved in our efforts in calling your State Representatives and State Senators on the above bills that impact you and your Local. We also want you to reach out if you have any questions about the bills listed in this update, or any other bills that we will be working on during this session.

The Massachusetts Coalition of Police Leadership and Legislative Committee members continue to work in partnership with the National Association of Police Organization (NAPO) in Washington, DC. Our efforts are dedicated to ensuring our benefits and working conditions are protected at the national level.

Thank you for going out there and protecting your communities every day.

Happy, Healthy and Safe Holidays to you and your families.



John Nelson
First Vice President

TO: All MassCOP Locals
FROM: In-House Counsel Tim King
DATE: March 31, 2025
RE: Rule 14 Update

The Massachusetts Coalition of Police legal team has been working tirelessly for the past month to work our way through the recent changes to Massachusetts Rule of Criminal Procedure 14.

For those of you who do not know, Rule 14 is the criminal procedure rule that deals with discovery (what needs to be turned over to the defense in a criminal matter). A recent case that made its way to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court *CPCS v. AG*, 480 Mass. 700 (2018), set the groundwork for an advisory committee to be established to make changes to Rule 14 that would outline the procedure for the Commonwealth to fulfill its duty to “learn of and disclose...any exculpatory evidence that is held by agents of the prosecution team...”. *Graham v. District Attorney for the Hampden Dist.*, 493 Mass.348 (2024) and *Commonwealth V. McFarlane*, 493 Mass. 385 (2024) expanded the police misconduct exculpatory evidence rules in *Brady v. Maryland* 373 U.S. 83 (1963) and were also included in the creation of the new rule.

One of the first things you need to understand about the new rule is that exculpatory evidence needs to be turned over for everyone on the prosecutions team. Rule 14 (a)(1) “...the prosecution team includes all persons under the prosecuting office’s direction and control. (A) Personnel of police departments or other law enforcement agencies who were or are involved in the investigation of the case, before or after charges were issued, or were involved in the prosecution of the case.”

It is no longer the rule that if you are testifying you need to turn over exculpatory information, it is everyone involved in the case. In the case of police officers, if there is a doubt as to whether you are a member of the prosecution team, it will likely be resolved in favor of disclosure.

Rule 14 (a)(23) The prosecutor has a duty to inform, inquire, collect, disclose, preserve, notify, and record information. Most counties have chosen to do this via a form consisting of specific questions designed to elicit the information called for under Rule 14 as well as the additional police misconduct case law. We have worked with a number of counties who have developed forms that we felt were not initially within the scope of Rule 14. We went as far as drafting a petition to the Supreme Judicial Court to get a hearing in front of a single justice to parse out exactly how these questions should be asked and bring non-complying counties into compliance.

Fortunately, we did not have to file the petition, as the county in question decided to work in conjunction with the police chiefs and MassCOP in creating a questionnaire that was within the scope of Rule 14. We have met with DAs and staff to review most county's forms and feel they are now complying. When the initial forms started coming out, we had sent some marked up forms to many of our locals advising not to answer certain questions. Please discard – Member of National Association of Police Organization, N.A.P.O. those marked up forms and notify your members that at this time we are advising members to complete the latest version of the form supplied by the ADA. If there is a case specific issue that needs advice, please reach out to your Area VP.

These inquiries must be done on a case-by-case basis after the prosecution team for a particular case has been determined. Rule 14 (b)(1) mandates that the prosecutor must disclose to the defense RELEVANT investigative materials that are in the possession, custody, or control of any member of the prosecution team. 14(c) states that the prosecutor shall provide discovery at arraignment that is in the possession of the prosecutor. They need to have the remainder in by the first pretrial conference. If more exculpatory evidence is discovered after that time, the prosecutor has a continuing duty to notify the defense of the additional items.

In conjunction with Rule 14, the relevant aforementioned case law also requires that the prosecutor review and turn over any evidence of exculpatory police misconduct to the defense. They also have a duty to turn over any adverse credibility finding by a judge. This information will be supplied by you to the prosecutor via the forms that the ADA will present to you. For the purposes of the "Have you ever been convicted of a crime" question, a CWOFF is an admission to sufficient facts and is considered a conviction.

Unfortunately, the rule does not separate work related and non-work-related crimes and does not only consider those that have happened since your employment. Any conviction, even if prior to employment must be disclosed, except for expunged records. (There is still some question about sealed records and if you have a sealed record, please talk to the ADA and your Area VP for further guidance).

One of the concerns is that active police officers will constantly be filling out these forms. What you should do is complete the form on your computer and save it. If nothing has changed since your last submission, you can simply submit the already completed form to the ADA. This is new for the DAs offices as well as all police officers in the Commonwealth.

We will continue to stay on top of this matter as it evolves. We are here to assist our membership with questions and concerns relating to the implementation of this new rule. It is something we all must deal with, but we want to ensure that all the involved parties are playing by the rules and remain in compliance. If you have any issues, please reach out to your Area VP.

I want to thank everyone involved in this this work to date. Our legal team working in conjunction with my office has included Sandulli Grace, Pyle Rome, and our litigation firm of White and Williams. We have also had assistance from our Area VPs, and a special thanks to Area VP Chris Kelsey for his boots on the ground up to the minute updates and involvement.

Our local leadership/members also participated by added input, kept us apprised as to what local district courts were doing, and were listed as plaintiffs in our actual and proposed court filings. We also networked with other organizations such as the State Police Association of Massachusetts, Southeast Chiefs of Police, and the NEPBA. It takes a strong team to come together as quickly and potently as we did to produce positive results, and I am proud to say this team did just that.

THE TRUTH ABOUT LYING REVISITED

By John M. Becker

Sandulli Grace, P.C.

From the point of view of your union representatives and attorneys, the hardest thing to defend is a lie. When an officer engages in misconduct and lies when confronted or questioned about it, either orally or in writing, or leaves damaging facts out of a report in a situation when they normally should be recorded, the officer has made the job of the union rep and lawyer many times more difficult and has jeopardized his job security that much more. It is always easier to defend the misconduct than to defend the officer's decision to lie about it. Many arbitrators agree with the oft-repeated refrain of management that a police officer's credibility is essential to his ability to do his job, which involves testifying in court. So, while arbitrators may apply normal principles of progressive discipline and disparate treatment to most misconduct cases, they are more likely to treat a police untruthfulness case with a higher standard.

I wrote the original version of this article back in 2005, after the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued a decision saying that arbitrator could not put a police officer who lied back on the job. (The case is *City of Boston v. Boston Police Patrolmen's Association*, 443 Mass. 813 (2005).) But now is a good time to revisit the issue, as untruthfulness is back in the spotlight in recent years due to the existence of the POST (Peace Officer Standards & Training) Commission. Among the alleged abuses that POST is focused on are: excessive force, discrimination (including profiling), and untruthfulness. That means that telling the truth could mean the difference between keeping and losing your POST certification.

In the 2005 court case, the Boston Police Department fired an officer for alleged misconduct during an encounter with two citizens who were in a double-parked car. The union grieved the discipline and took it to arbitration. The arbitrator decided that the officer lied about what happened when he wrote his police report, when he filed for criminal charges against the citizens, when he spoke to internal affairs investigators, when he testified at a Departmental hearing, and when he testified at the arbitration. But the arbitrator ordered the officer reinstated with a one-year suspension, primarily because there was evidence of disparate treatment: other officers had committed similar or worse misconduct and had received only suspensions. The City appealed the decision to court – the Superior Court and Appeals Court upheld the arbitrator, but the Supreme Judicial Court overruled the lower courts and overturned the arbitrator's award. The SJC found that it violated public policy to force the City to reinstate this

officer, after the arbitrator found that he misused his official position to file false police reports and take out false criminal charges against innocent civilians, and then told his false version of the story again and again to investigators, hearing officers, and the arbitrator herself. The court noted that lying on a police report, filing criminal charges, and lying under oath are all felonies, and there is a law saying convicted felons cannot be police officers. So, even though the officer was never charged with any felony, the court said that reinstating him would violate a public policy against allowing someone who commits these kinds of acts from working as a police officer. The disparate treatment evidence was irrelevant in this kind of case, the court said. Unless you have evidence that the Department discriminated against the officer because of his race or sex or some other protected category, you could bring in evidence of two dozen other cases of more lenient discipline, or non-enforcement of the rules against other officers, and it would not make a difference. Cases like these, the court said, are evaluated on their own and without regard to what happened to other officers in the past.

The case was shocking to many because courts so rarely overturn arbitrator's awards. Most observers agree that what so angered the court was the fact that the case involved an untruthful police officer. It would be wrong to generalize too much from the case – it does not mean that every termination for untruthfulness will be upheld on appeal, nor does it mean that every allegation of acts that could be the basis for a felony charge will lead to a discharge. But the case does mean that when a police officer is disciplined for misconduct that involves untruthfulness, arbitrators and courts are going to be much more likely to uphold the discipline. So if it was hard to defend a lie before, now it will be even harder.

Psychologists tell us that everybody lies. But most of the lying we do falls into the category of 'white lies.' Charles V. Ford, Ph. D., an expert on lying, describes five categories of lies:

- (1) White lies are used to make social interactions more comfortable. They include self-protective lies ("Sorry, I can't go to the party, I'm feeling sick") and altruistic lies ("Nice haircut"; "You'll be fine.")
- (2) Humorous lies are harmless exaggerations used to embellish a story or joke. In these cases, what matters isn't the truth, but whether the story is funny or not.
- (3) Defensive lies are the most dangerous lies and are almost never harmless. "I didn't do it." "I wasn't there." "I didn't see anything."
- (4) Aggressive lies are the stuff of rumormongers and bad guys in the movies – you're not just defending yourself, you're attacking someone else. "I saw him do it." "Did you know that he is a [fill in the blank]?"

(5) Pathological lies are those told for no rational purpose, but just because the person can't seem to stop himself. "They're going to build a movie theater in that lot – sometime next summer."

There is a sixth category – lies of omission. Although the experts don't like to call these lies technically, they are just as dangerous for your job. When you have an obligation to speak up and you remain silent, that is a type of untruthfulness. These can be divided into at least two categories – silence on your own behalf (you did it, but you aren't admitting it) and on behalf of someone else (you know who did it, but you won't say). Both types of silent lies can subject you to disciplinary action.

Note that lies that seem harmless in some contexts can turn serious when told in an employment context. "I can't go to the party because I'm sick" may be a white lie, but "I can't come to work because I'm sick" can subject the officer to disciplinary action. Exaggerations when you're describing the fish that got away are fine, but work-related exaggerations or downplaying can lead to discipline ("he was yelling at the top of his lungs," "she hit me several times," "the car was going about 90 miles an hour" "I barely touched it""I did not raise my voice").

The time to stop the lying is at the beginning, because the more you lie about the misconduct, the harder it is to tell the truth about it. The psychologists tell us that liars are often trying to convince themselves that they did not commit the misconduct – it is much easier to lie convincingly to others if you've already convinced yourself that the lie is true. According to Doctor Ford, "the lie facilitates self-deception; people lie to others in order to lie to themselves." If you find yourself telling people, "I know it's hard to believe, but ..." take a step back and ask if maybe it's hard to believe because it's not true. Don't become the victim of your own deception.

Knowing that many of us have a tendency to lie in our own defense when we do something wrong is not an excuse. Instead, it should put us on notice that, when we engage in misconduct, the temptation to lie will be strong. We should be prepared to fight it. Remember: almost no one who tells a lie believes that they will be caught, yet think of how many lies are exposed on a regular basis. Knowing the wrongdoers have a tendency to lie in their own defense also means that those investigating the misconduct will be looking for signs of lying and self-deception, just as you do when investigating crimes. So, if you screw up, 'fess up. You may take a hit, but your union and your union attorneys will do our best to see that you get a fair shake. If you screw up and lie about it too, you're not avoiding the pain, you're only postponing it, while making it much harder for us to defend you.

MassCOP's Legal Defense Fund

A comprehensive Legal Defense Plan is included as part of your membership dues, at no additional cost to you. More importantly, MassCOP retains the prestigious law firms of Sandulli Grace, PC and criminal attorneys, Anderson and Goldman, both established Boston-based legal firms that consistently represent police statewide, including the Boston Police Union, with the same experienced attorneys year after year, ensuring that determinations are made by individuals who understand our members' needs and the work you do.

CIVIL

Representation by an experienced civil attorney when a member is sued for an act within the scope of employment, and the employing agency refuses to defend the member. The Legal Defense Fund will provide an experienced attorney to monitor the case.

CRIMINAL

Full representation by a highly knowledgeable and experienced criminal attorney from the first indication of potential criminal exposure arising from an act committed within the scope of employment (e.g., shooting, custody, death, use of force resulting in serious physical injury, and violation of civil rights).

ADMINISTRATIVE

Representation in cases arising from an act or omission within the scope of a member's employment as a law enforcement officer (non-scope administrative coverage is also included through any departmental administrative investigation or informal non-adversary pre-disciplinary hearing).

For more information, see our Legal Defense Fund brochure [HERE](#).

MassCOP's Extension of PEER Support

Stress, depression, and suicidal thoughts are just a few of the common issues that affect people in different ways each day. Important signs to look out for include trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, low energy, and feelings of anxiety. The incident rate of PTSD and suicide is five times higher in police officers and dispatchers than in the civilian population.

We are pleased to announce that we have enhanced and expanded our PEER support resources to include the LEADER MAST Clinic which offers these services for all first responders, regardless of their work status, as well as their spouses.

The LEADER MAST Outpatient Clinic at McLean Hospital is an outpatient mental health clinic that offers treatment for first responders who routinely endure tremendous on-the-job and personal stressors, and often encounter significant obstacles in seeking treatment. The LEADER MAST Clinic offers time-limited, specialized care for those affected by depression, anxiety, stress, and trauma, which can include individual therapy, group therapy, couples therapy, and medication management.

If you, your spouse, or a colleague is interested in learning more about connecting with the LEADER MAST Clinic, please contact Wendy Currie, LICSW at 617-855-3814.

Take the confidential and anonymous Self-Check Quiz to connect with a peer support officer and see how you might benefit from these available services. peer support self-CHECK quiz available at MassCOPPeerSupportQuiz.org.

For more information, see our PEER Support brochure [HERE](#).



**Presidents, please encourage your members
to sign up for their**

MassCOP Digital ID's

Have your members go to our website, www.MassCOP.org, and on the home page, click on the “**Get my digital ID**” tab.

Fill in the required boxes: full name, cell phone, Local's name, Local's number, employee's non-work email address, and employee's ID from the town/City. (The employee ID number is on the individual's paystub, or the payroll office can be contacted.) **Do not submit a government email address.** After submitting the request, an acknowledgment will be sent stating that the application was correctly received. The MassCOP Wallet ID will be sent within 1 to 3 business days.

In order to successfully complete the sign-up for the digital ID, it must be downloaded and stored in the individual's Apple or Google wallet.

If you prefer to send a contact list on behalf of your members, please [click here for the MassCOP Members Contact Form](#). It can be emailed to Sarah at the MassCOP office.

For any questions or feedback,
please contact Sarah at 877-MassCOP or
sbuckell@masscop.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2026 MassCOP Regional Training Seminars
Stay Tuned - Details to Follow!

46th Annual Convention and Golf Tournament
The Emerald Resort and
Cape Cod Irish Village in Hyannis
September 16th (golf), 17th and 18th

Rosters

**Pursuant to our Constitution, Article VI, Section 8 –
Maintenance of Good Standing,
all Locals are required to submit a current roster.**

**To ensure that information for your Local is current and up to date in
our system, we ask that you submit your current roster on a monthly
basis or with each payment of your dues.**

Contract Surveys

Please complete a contract survey for your Local.

The link to the Contract Survey can be found [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Julia at jmp@masscop.org.

Payment of Union Dues For Your Local

We offer Locals the option of Direct Deposit to simplify the payment of their monthly dues.

Direct deposit is payroll deduction from the Town directly from their paychecks. The Town then deposits your dues directly into our checking account.

Our form for Direct Deposit can be found [HERE](#).

**If you need any assistance,
please contact Julia at jmp@masscop.org.**

Thank You For All You Do!

Check Us Out!

Visit our website for more updated information:

www.masscop.org

and

Visit our Pro Shop Tab for our Black Friday Sale
on MASSCOP merchandise/apparel.

(20% off with coupon code, MCOP20)

Now thru December 3rd.

Orders placed in this time frame will be received within two
weeks or less in time for Christmas!



10TH ANNIVERSARY



POWERED BY

nationalgrid



Run, Walk, or Step at TD Garden

TO SUPPORT FIRST RESPONDER AND MILITARY CHARITIES

January 25th, 2026

9:00am - 1:00pm
TD GARDEN



FIREFIGHTER + EMT DIVISION



LAW ENFORCEMENT + MILITARY DIVISION



COMMUNITY, FAMILY + FRIEND DIVISION

TO LEARN MORE AND SIGN UP:

BostonBruins.com/BFitChallenge



bfit@bostonbruins.com
for additional questions



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CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM:

(508) 581-9336

1-(877) MASSCOP

1-(877) 627-7267

***Follow recorded instructions for immediate response**

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