



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

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VICE-CHAIRMAN
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WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY BY SENATOR STEVEN A. BADDOUR TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
ON S. 891 AN ACT REFORMING THE PAROLE SYSTEM AND PROTECTING PUBLIC SAFETY**

March 16, 2011

Representative Eugene L. O'Flaherty
House Chairman
Joint Committee on The Judiciary
State House, Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Senate Chairman
Joint Committee on The Judiciary
State House, Room 416-B
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman O'Flaherty and Chairman Creem,

Every member of society should feel safe in their own community. They should feel safe to walk to the store, go to work and drive around town. They should feel that their children are safe to ride their bikes, play outside, and go to school - all without fear that violent habitual offenders are being freed on parole to prey again in our communities.

Today in Massachusetts, I cannot stand here and say with confidence that this is the case. For far too long, criminal offenders have been able to game the system and use every loophole available to avoid having to pay for their crimes. Justice is not being served and the public is not as safe as it should be.

The Commonwealth needs to blend a tough-on-crime and commonsense approach towards those convicted of violent crimes by implementing immediate changes and reforms to the Parole Board and the Parole Process. These changes will help ensure that hardened, career criminals stay in prison - where they ought to be - and shift the power from the criminals back to the victims and society. Justice, not criminals, must have the advantage and today she doesn't.

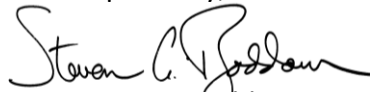
Each of the bills being heard today by The Judiciary committee contains a series of steps to ensure that truth-in-sentencing and parole reform become a reality in Massachusetts. And,

what is critically important is that two of the bills, Rep. Hill's Melissa's Bill and the Baddour/Tarr bill eliminate the circumstances that led to the early release of a habitual violent offender like Domenic Cinelli. These bills would make anyone with more than one life sentence ineligible for parole – period.

Everyone deserves a second chance, but no one deserves a 3rd or 4th when we are talking about the types of violent crimes here.

These are key pieces to improving public safety. However, there is more to do. I want these bills to be the starting point of a comprehensive reform bill that fixes how we sentence AND release offenders and who is doing it. I challenge all of us here today to look at my bill, Governor Patrick's bill, Melissa's bill – and others – and find the pieces from each that work in harmony to create real change. This makes sense and sends a powerful signal to the citizens of the Commonwealth that we are serious about restoring credibility to our criminal justice system. Melissa Gosule, Officer John Maguire, all victims, and every citizen of the Commonwealth deserves no less.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven A. Baddour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Steven A. Baddour
State Senator
First Essex District