

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



COMMON GROUND

OCTOBER 2025

UNLOCKING OUR POWER HOUR

CIVIC PARTICIPATION, VOTER EDUCATION CONTINUES AT SCSD

INCARCERATED WOMEN JOIN SCSD
PODCASTING PROGRAM | PG. 5

SCSD'S HARBOR PATROL TEAM
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A MESSAGE FROM SCSD:

OCTOBER 2025

Greetings,

...and welcome to the October 2025 edition of the Common Ground Newsletter.

In this issue, we share with you an inspiring new art therapy course at Suffolk County Jail – an initiative that invites participants to explore a range of artistic mediums as an outlet for emotional expression, building self-esteem, and fostering personal growth.

We also introduce the expansion of our new Podcasting Program at the Suffolk County House of Correction, which now includes our female residents and teaches skills in podcast production, content creation, and social media management.

Additionally, we reflect upon our ongoing civic engagement collaboration with Healing Our Land, Inc. (HOLI) for the “Unlocking Our Power Hour,” an event that continues our commitment to voter education and enrollment for eligible men and women in our two facilities. This year’s event, which was held at the House of Correction, brought residents from both facilities together via Zoomcast, allowing residents of both facilities to participate in real-time.

In other stories, we proudly recognize some of our dedicated staff members, with two employee profiles – one featuring Superintendent Abiezer Ayuso and the other spotlighting Captain Shaunette Fitzpatrick; we celebrate our September Officers of the Month; we congratulate our newly appointed Sergeants, and we offer praise to our Harbor Patrol team and the Winthrop Harbormaster Office for their efforts around an heroic life-saving rescue.

We also showcase our staff’s community engagement and participation with a special “Around Suffolk County: Back to School” focus on events that our staff participated in.

We hope that you’ll enjoy reading these and other stories in this issue, and we look forward to bringing you more insight and information about the form and functions of the Department in the issues to come.

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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SCSD AND HEALING OUR LAND, INC. (HOLI) HOST “UNLOCKING OUR POWER HOUR” ON VOTING RIGHTS



Suffolk County Jail Residents During the “Unlocking Our Power Hour” events.

Healing Our Land, Inc. (HOLI), in partnership with the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department (SCSD), hosted an “Unlocking Our Power Hour” to shine a light on voting rights and civic empowerment for incarcerated individuals.

HOLI, founded and led by Pastor Franklin Wendell Hobbs, has long been dedicated to uplifting disenfranchised communities across Boston through change-driven organizing. Their mission emphasizes restoring dignity and creating opportunities for civic engagement in democratic processes for incarcerated and returning citizens. The “Unlocking Our Power Hour,” now in its second year, served as a direct expression of that mission inside our correctional facilities.

The event brought together fourteen residents from the House of Correction and six from Suffolk County Jail, linked through a live Zoom call that allowed real-time dialogue across both facilities. The group covered a range of topics important to their lived experiences, including: the 2026 Massachusetts gubernatorial election, immigration, transgender rights, services offered within our facilities, and the desire for expanded vocational programming.

Notable attendees included Massachusetts State Representative Russell Holmes, and former United States Attorney for the District of Massachusetts Rachael Rollins.

One participant, Isaiah, spoke directly

to SCSD leadership and local legislators, stating: “From my perspective, this [conversation] is good to have because it teaches us things we may not know about the justice system... about oppression in all its aspects.” Another participant echoed this sentiment by asking to bolster Suffolk

County Jail’s rehabilitative programming so that “we may better ourselves for society out there.”

When asked why these individuals remain dedicated to these reflection circles, one member clarified, “All politics is local.” He continued, “This is an election year... If I find a project I feel passionate about, I try to remain civically involved. If you find an issue that’s burning in your heart, just start with that one issue and get involved as best as you can. See if you can make a difference. So many elections lately have been decided by only a handful of votes.”

Currently, Massachusetts law excludes individuals serving felony sentences; however, those incarcerated for misdemeanors or awaiting trial retain the right to vote. In partnership with HOLI, SCSD has worked tirelessly to ensure these individuals are informed of their rights, supported through the registration process, and empowered to cast ballots—whether through absentee voting or secure ballot boxes installed in SCSD facility lobbies.

The “Unlocking Our Power Hour” was part of a broader movement to institutionalize voting access within correctional settings. Ahead of Boston’s preliminary municipal elections on September 9, 2025, more than 100 incarcerated voters were registered through HOLI and SCSD’s efforts. Assistant Deputy Superintendent Carlos Goulart spoke to the importance of these efforts for Boston’s democracy, noting that participation in local elections often determines the policies that most directly impact our communities.

By convening elected officials, advo-

cates, and incarcerated community members, the “Unlocking Our Power Hour” affirmed that democracy is strongest when it includes all members.

Thank you to our extended SCSD team who made the event a success: Assistant Deputy Superintendent Carlos Goulart, Superintendent Matthew Decastro, Assistant Superintendent Rachelle Steinberg, Assistant Deputy Superintendent Christina Chaney, Director of Women’s Programming Jennifer Wolter, PEACE Unit Supervisor Kenneth Jackson, Supervisor of Men’s Programming Jack Chisolm, NSJ Administrative Caseworker Supervisor Antoinette Thomas, NSJ Caseworker Rosemary Arias, and Director of External Affairs Peter Van Delft.

A special thanks is likewise in order to Pastor Hobbs, HOLI Board Member Dr. DeAnza Cook, and Democracy Behind Bars Coalition MA Jail-Based Voting Facilitator Elly Kalfous for facilitating the event and for their continued advocacy for equitable access to the ballot box.



NEW CREATIVE OUTLET AT SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL

As part of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's continued efforts to bring more offerings for detainees, a new art therapy initiative at Suffolk County Nashua Street Jail is providing a powerful outlet for healing, reflection, and personal growth. With a focus on rehabilitation and reentry, programs like this are designed to equip individuals with tools they can carry beyond incarceration.

At the heart of this initiative is Shawnte Walls, a caseworker at Suffolk County Nashua Street Jail, whose passion for creativity and mental health inspired the development of an original art therapy program tailored to the needs of the detainee population. Walls, who joined the Department over a year ago after working in the medical field, quickly embraced her role supporting detainees with housing, recovery programs, court coordination, and reentry services. But she also saw an opportunity to bring something new to the table, something that could help individuals channel their emotions and feelings through art therapy.

"I absolutely love art," said Walls. "Although I'm not an art teacher, my best friend is an artist, so I get a lot of inspiration and guidance from her." With her natural creativity and drive to foster positivity, she designed a rotating cycle series that combines creative journaling, painting, scrapbooking, and affirmation exercises—all built around open conversation and emotional reflection.

The first group cycle, titled "Scrap and App," engaged detainees in themed weekly conversations while they created personal scrapbooks using collage, paint, and drawing. "Sometimes it would be like a de-

bate, but mostly they're open conversations," Walls explained. "While everyone is speaking, they're creating their scrapbooks." Each session began and ended with affirmations, a practice that has become a cornerstone of the program.

The current cycle, titled "The Art of Becoming," takes place twice a week with a group of about eight participants. This time, detainees are painting their affirmations while listening to music and engaging in group discussions focused on self-image, confidence, and emotional awareness. "They laugh a lot," Walls noted. "They actually look forward to it. I think if we provide a space where they can just talk openly, with no judgment, and we're also doing art and listening to music, it creates a better attitude—and that's definitely happening."

When someone struggles to come up with ideas, Walls offers coloring pages to help reduce anxiety and shift their focus to something calming. One impactful activity involved paper cut-outs of human figures with crowns, where participants wrote affirmations about what they truly feel they deserve. These exercises led to deeper conversations about self-worth and healing. "My class is very therapeutic," Walls shared. "I'm very big on affirmations, self-image, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Sometimes I ask questions to help them reflect on what's inside—then we talk through it together."

The idea of the program was born from Walls' own personality. Known affectionately by staff as "Sunshine" for her daily affirmations and uplifting energy, she realized she could



*Shawnte Walls, Case Worker
Suffolk County Jail*

bring the same energy into the classroom. "Eventually, my program got approved," she recalls, "and Munashe, whom I work with in casework, helped me with the class. We're a great team and a dynamic duo."

For Walls, art is a connection, explaining, "Art is not just drawing or painting, it's also writing and music. It welcomes different perspectives. I think having these offerings in a correctional setting is extremely important."

"I'm just excited to see what Nashua Street has planned when it comes to bringing more art into the atmosphere," shared Walls.

As the Department continues to expand rehabilitative services, programs like the Jail Art Group represent safe and supportive spaces that foster healing, encourage growth, and help individuals return to their communities as positive contributors.



AFFIRMATION PROJECT | CYCLE 2

DETAINEES DOCUMENT THEIR
STRENGTHS AND AFFIRMATIONS TO
ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM AND
CONFIDENCE.

“LOCKED IN” PODCAST PROGRAM EXPANDS TO WOMEN’S COHORT



The Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department is proud to announce that the newly titled “Locked In” Podcast Program has officially launched its first women’s cohort. Meeting twice a week, the class provides participants with hands-on training in podcast production while fostering a creative and collaborative environment for communications media enthusiasts.

This first women’s group includes three participants, all new to podcasting but one, who had dabbled in TikTok social media creation before incarceration. “Princess,” who casually enjoyed filming food reviews and cooking vlogs, explained that her earlier trepidations about addressing the camera have subsided as she’s grown more comfortable with the storytelling abilities.”

“It felt weird speaking to something that doesn’t talk back, but this class is helping me get comfortable with that.” “I did some reviews with my nephew, and noticed how our views would skyrocket when we were more organic. I

wanted to learn how to bring that same authenticity out myself.”

Speaking to the social growth gained throughout the course weeks, Adaya mentioned that when she first heard about the class, her hope was: “‘This could make me famous.’ But, once I learned we’d be working with cameras, transmitters, receivers—I didn’t expect all of that—I realized I’d also be gaining skills. Now I think about showing my little brother, my sister, or my mom one day. That’s the real goal: to look back and see I’ve come so far.”

Despite initial logistical considerations, students have shown remarkable commitment and adaptability. Thanks to the leadership of Program Director Clifford Bonnet and the support of staff, including Director of the Women’s Group Jennifer Wolter, Assistant Deputy Superintendent Christina Chaney, Captain Julie Blackford, Special Sheriff Mark Lawhorne, and Director of Reintegration Steven Siciliano. Holding gratitude

for the newfound confidence and creative outlet the experience has brought, Ashley asserted that she also wanted the opportunity to provide “a woman’s perspective of being in here and locked in—it’s totally different from the men. It’s good to have the women’s voice out there [on the podcast] as well.”

While in its third week, the women’s class has already completed two test-run recordings, with plans for each future cohort to produce an official interdepartmental podcast episode under the “Locked In” banner. The curriculum continues to evolve based on student engagement, balancing technical skills like camera operation and editing with opportunities for dialogue, storytelling, and peer connection.

With “Locked In” now firmly established, each cycle of the course will culminate in a finished podcast episode, amplifying voices often left unheard and equipping participants with skills they can carry forward.





EMPLOYEE PROFILE: SUPERINTENDENT ABIEZER AYUSO

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” This quote, originally spoken by Malcolm X, was often recited by former colleague Lieutenant Tom DeRosa and respectfully adopted by Superintendent of External Affairs Abiezer Ayuso.

Few people have shaped the public face of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department more than Superintendent of External Affairs Abiezer “Abe” Ayuso. Having committed more than three decades of his life to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, Superintendent Ayuso marked history as the Department's first Latino Special Sheriff. Beyond his leadership inside the Jail, Superintendent Ayuso has become one of the most visible and trusted faces of the Department through his pivotal work in Communications External Affairs. He has been instrumental in forging and strengthening community partnerships that bring the Sheriff's Department into neighborhoods across Suffolk County, helping to grow programs such as the Choice Program, the Summer Enrichment Program, D.A.S.H., JailBrake, Senior Safety, and more. Through these initiatives, he has shaped the Department's public presence and ensured that its impact extends far beyond the walls of the Jail.

Born in Loíza, Puerto Rico, Superintendent Ayuso was the eighth of eleven children. His family moved to Boston when he was young, living in Dorchester, Mission Hill, and later the South End. After graduating from Charlestown

High School, he pursued a career in metal fabrication, completing a five-year apprenticeship and working in the trade at Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 for seven years before joining the Sheriff's Department in 1993. Speaking to how deeply influential Ayuso's extended family was and remains to his personal and career growth, he shared: “My father was a pastor [of La Iglesia de Cristo Misionera and El Buen Samaritano] for 41 years, so he was always that guide keeping me on the right path; but it was my mother, a fellow missionary, who pushed me. She was my support in uncertain times.” Having looked up to his two older brothers, who had gone on to serve as Massachusetts State Troopers, Ayuso was inspired to serve in their footsteps. His sister, who now serves as the Head Pastor of Casa de Fe, likewise reaffirmed his connection to faith, which he would rely on throughout his journey.

From his earliest role as a Jail Officer, Ayuso distinguished himself with professionalism, dedication, and his ability to bridge cultural and language divides. As a fluent Spanish speaker, he became an invaluable resource to Spanish-speaking detainees who otherwise would have struggled to communicate. Over the years, he rose through the ranks—serving as Deputy, Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Assistant Deputy Superintendent of External Affairs—before being appointed Special Sheriff in 2021. In this role, he assumed the responsibilities of the Sheriff when needed, a position that underscores the trust placed in his leadership.

Hungry for a position in leadership and the representation it brought after sixteen years of Deputy service, Ayuso realized, “I could move up and continue to move on, taking the knowledge I had acquired across all the divisions with me. During my time in Transportation, I saw a lot of different faces come through—some of which I had grown up with in my own neighborhoods—and realized how many people needed the help.” He continued, “after years of seeing my peers

who oftentimes had less experience continue up the ranks, it finally donned on me that I could do it too. That I could be that change in leadership.” To his fellow officers and recruits, particularly of Latin heritage who may oftentimes count themselves out, Superintendent Ayuso echoes the sentiment instilled by his superiors, Lieutenants Garcia and Burgos, as well as Captain Quiles: “Don't let other people just bypass you. Take the opportunity on your own.”

Beyond the walls of the Suffolk County Jail, Ayuso has been a constant presence in the community. He has overseen numerous outreach initiatives, including the Sheriff's Honor Guard, the Motorcycle Unit, the Senior Identification Program, and Ident-A-Youth. He was also a founding member of the Department's Choice Program, which brings officers into schools and community centers to encourage young people to respect themselves, make positive choices, and prepare for the future.

“The Choice Program will always be one of the proudest parts of my career. In 2002, we started with 22 officers, doing it because we cared, all on our own time. When I became an External Affairs Officer, I brought it into churches, community centers, and the streets, because that's where kids needed us,” Ayuso explained.

His work is not limited to the Department. Ayuso has also volunteered with the Red Cross of Massachusetts, Fair Foods, the Puerto Rican Festival of Massachusetts, Bikes Not Bombs, and other community organizations. He has been especially committed to helping connect Boston's Hispanic community with resources, opportunities, and role models in public service.

Today, Superintendent Ayuso is not only a seasoned leader in law enforcement but also a proud father of four and grandfather of five. His journey reflects his perseverance and his commitment to serving others.

Having recently announced his upcoming retirement, Superintendent Ayuso reflects fondly on his years of service with the following note: “In my time here with the Department, and particularly with External Affairs and Communications, I have always worked to build bridges between the Department and the communities we serve. I leave here proud of the work that I've done to bring people closer to the Department while setting a positive example of the ways that law enforcement and our neighborhoods can work together.”

EMPLOYEE PROFILE: CAPTAIN SHAUNETTE FITZPATRICK



On September 25, 2000, Captain Shaunette Fitzpatrick made a move that would shape the next 25 years of her life. After a long career of service in the medical field, where she managed physician groups and doctors' offices, she felt the constant changes in the healthcare industry were moving in the wrong direction. Instead of continuing through the uncertainty, she chose to enter the corrections profession, a path that she had never imagined herself taking.

"I didn't have any law enforcement experience," she recalls. "But someone close to me encouraged me to apply. I figured, 'why not take the leap?'"

From that decision came a career forged in consistency, responsibility, and work ethic.

"I had a good experience with the supervisors and staff that I worked with, Captain Fitzpatrick continued. "Eventually, I ended up liking my job and learning different things every day." Beginning as a correction officer at the House of Correction, Capt. Fitzpatrick gradually built her path forward, becoming a sergeant in 2015 working in larger units where she supervised approximately 180 residents, including detainees. Then, as a Lieutenant in 2019, she supervised Building 3, where she was responsible for reporting and delivering information about any incidents or occurrences within the units. After nine-

teen months as a Lieutenant, Fitzpatrick was promoted to her current rank of captain. During her journey with the Department, she has worked nearly every station, including booking, operations, the lobby, visits, and more, thus building a well-rounded perspective and reputation for leading with structure and integrity.

Fitzpatrick's days as Captain and Assistant Shift Commander are filled with making decisions that affect the flow of the overall operations of the institution.

"There's a lot that runs through our office," she explains. "Time-off requests and entries, daily assignments, ensuring coverage, maintaining officers in the right positions, coordinating with Human Resources, and addressing every concern with an inmate, detainee or officer. We have to be ready for anything, and every day is different." It is this unpredictability that keeps Capt. Fitzpatrick sharp.

"What's most challenging is the unexpected," said Fitzpatrick, reflecting on the job's adversities. "Things happen fast here, and you've got to make quick decisions. The structure of our day can change in seconds, and it often does."

However, what drives her to help others is being someone that people can rely on.

"I don't like leaving things undone. If someone needs help and I don't know the answer, I'll find it before the end of the day. It's not about being just a supervisor; it's about making sure things are right and people feel supported. That's my satisfaction."

Recently, Fitzpatrick wisely stepped in to support a staff member facing a challenging period on the job. She recognized signs of burnout and took action. With discretion, she brought the situation to her superior and together identified a solution

that helped them to continue his duties without compromising his wellbeing or position. "We're all humans," Capt. Fitzpatrick reflected. "Sometimes people just need to talk. One conversation can make someone feel seen and supported. That's what leadership is."

Special Sheriff Mark Lawhorne later commended Capt. Fitzpatrick for her leadership, noting that her proactive and empathetic approach is exactly the kind of quiet leadership that lifts others and strengthens the Department. For Captain Fitzpatrick, it was simply about doing what's right.

"We have to look beyond the uniform sometimes," Capt. Fitzpatrick explained. "We all have lives outside the Department. People have health issues, children, and responsibilities. If I can adjust a schedule slightly or help someone balance life and work, I'll do it."

Outside of work, Fitzpatrick finds her grounding in her family, which remains her deepest source of inspiration. She is a proud grandmother and mother of three college graduates, including a daughter who is currently pursuing her master's degree as a nurse practitioner.

"They're my motivation," Fitzpatrick shared. "They remind me why I do this work."

After a quarter century in our Department, she still loves what she does and continues to show up every day with purpose and pride.

"It feels good to be recognized. Women in corrections have to push twice as hard to be seen sometimes. This reinforces my belief that what I'm doing matters."

To those just starting in the field, she shares a message: "Be true to yourself. Be smart. Make good decisions, and don't focus on the outside. Focus on what you can do to make your job better. That's what will carry you through."

Captain Shaunette Fitzpatrick continues to be known for her integrity, dedication, and empathic leadership. She consistently solves problems without ego and recognizes the humanity of those around her, making her a respected leader and a valuable member of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.

SCSD RECOGNIZES SEPTEMBER OFFICERS OF THE MONTH AND SERGEANT PROMOTIONS

As we continue to recognize our Department's hardworking and committed custody staff members, we are proud to highlight our five September Officers of the Month who were honored for their exceptional service and dedication. Included among the five were Sergeant Justin Vass and Officer Devon Trainor from the Suffolk County Jail, and Sergeant Tevin Stowers, Officer Ryan Green, and Officer Wider Mirville from the House of Correction. Their actions, in two different life-saving incidents, are a testament of the professionalism and courage that define the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.

Sergeant Justin Vass, who has served with the Department for over twelve years, and Officer Devon Trainor, who joined the Department just over a year ago, responded to a medical emergency at the Suffolk County Jail. A detainee had become unresponsive, prompting an urgent response. Working alongside members of the medical staff, both officers immediately began administering Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and delivered five doses of Narcan. Their coordinated efforts and rapid response were critical. After nearly nine minutes, the detainee became responsive, and breathing returned to a normal rhythm. Boston EMS arrived shortly after and transported the individual to the hospital for further evaluation.

Superintendent José Mojica commended their actions, stating, "The staff responding to this incident relied on their training and experience, which led to a positive outcome. The Superintendent's Office is proud of the professionalism displayed by our staff during this medical emergency."

Sergeant Vass, whose twelve years of service have included roles in records, booking, central control, and transport expressed humility upon receiving this recognition.

"It feels good to be recognized," said Sgt. Vass. "At the end of the day, we all try to do a good job and pass it down to our fellow officers."

Officer Trainor brought significant prior experience to the Department, having worked for the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) and the Department of Children & Families (DCF), as well as with the Navy. Reflecting upon his honor of being chosen for the award, Trainor said, "It is nice to see that, even at an entry level, officers like myself are recognized for good things. You deal with a lot every day, and this is just good motivation to keep going."

Sergeant Tevin Stowers, Officer Ryan Green, and Officer Wider Mirville responded to a life-threatening emergency at the House of Correction where an inmate attempted suicide. Without hesitation, the team acted quickly and decisively. Their fast response, clear communication, and effective teamwork directly prevented tragedy.

Assistant Deputy Superintendent Lauren Kelly commended their heroic efforts, stating, "This incident highlights the dedication, courage, and teamwork that represent the highest standards of our Department."

Sergeant Stowers, a Bostonian who originally studied Economics before discovering a passion for Law Enforcement, reflected on the recognition. "It feels good to get recognized," said Sgt. Stowers. "It's something impactful. It makes you want to keep doing a good job the best you can." Stowers currently supervises housing units at the House of Correction, helping to ensure residents receive meals, participate in programs, and access recreation time, among other responsibilities.

Officer Wider Mirville, who has been with the Department for over a year, shared his enthusiasm. "I feel good and excited because it's part of my job," said Officer Mirville. And, Officer Ryan Green, who was also recognized as Officer of the Month for August for his role in another life-saving incident, continues to demonstrate unwavering commitment to his role.

As we honor these five outstanding individuals, we are reminded of the extraordinary people who serve in our facilities every day. Their actions go above and beyond. They embody the values of courage and integrity and a strong commitment to public safety, serving with purpose to those under our care.



PROMOTIONS TO SERGEANT



Franklin Lemus-Pena:
Sergeant at Suffolk County Jail

"Do the right thing; it doesn't matter what you encounter."

"Stay dedicated, stay patient, and work hard. Do the right thing, and you'll reap the rewards."
~Sgt. Lemus-Pena



Marc St. Joy:
Sergeant at Suffolk County Jail
10 years with the Department

"Before joining the Department, I spent eleven years as a Juvenile Detention Officer in Florida. I've always valued the opportunity to guide others toward better choices. Now as a sergeant, I'm committed to helping new and current officers to grow, serve with dignity, and give their best to the community." ~Sgt. St. Joy



William Miller:
Sergeant at Suffolk County Jail
27 years with the Department

"Reflecting on my experience within the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, I have learned the importance of treating others fairly and remaining open to different situations. I strive to represent both the Department and my family the best I can with integrity."
~Sgt. Miller

SCSD'S HARBOR PATROL TEAM ASSISTS IN LIFE-SAVING RESCUE IN WINTHROP WATERS



*From left to right: Sgt. Dennis DeCarney
and Capt. Kevin Janielis*

On July 12th, the swift response and seamless teamwork of Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Deputy Marine Patrol and the Winthrop Harbormaster's Office turned what could have been a tragic day on the water into a life-saving success.

When a distress call came in reporting a capsized kayak in rough waters off the Winthrop coast, SCSD's Sergeant Dennis DeCarney, retired SCSD Captain Kevin Janielis, and Donny Lancelotte of the Winthrop Harbormaster's Office quickly mobilized into action. Battling thick fog, high winds, and choppy waters, the trio launched a coordinated Search and Rescue (SAR) mission under challenging maritime conditions.

"When we go out to conduct a SAR (Search and Rescue) mission on the water, it comes to our team's training, education, and experience at hand," said Sgt. DeCarney. "Being in thick fog and choppy seas looking for someone is a challenge. Knowing our Area of Responsibility (AOR) is crucial, like knowing what the hazards are nearby to look out for so we

don't hit obstructions or run aground, paying attention to which direction the tides and currents are moving, wind direction and sea state to determine if the water, calm or rough, dictates a 'set and drift' for us to follow which would indicate possible areas to search," commented DeCarney.

As they navigated through limited visibility and turbulent currents, each team member took on a critical role: the coxswain at the helm, the navigator monitoring chart plotters and radar, and the lookout scanning the water with support from advanced marine technology including Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) camera (which detects heat), radios, sonar depth, chart plotter, and real-time radar.

After more than an hour of intense searching in extremely bad conditions, the team successfully located one of the Persons in the Water (PIWs) who was, fortunately, wearing a Personal Flotation Device (PFD), but exhausted, cold, and unable to pull himself onto the boat.

"We deployed a life ring buoy to the victim and pulled him to our boat, but he was too exhausted to climb aboard," Captain Janielis explained. "We used a PIW water rescue method

to bring him in safely. Moments like that, when you know someone is going to be okay, it stays with you forever."

Shortly afterward, the team also rescued a second individual who had been kayaking with the first. Both were safely returned to shore for medical evaluation, where family members were waiting anxiously.

"Bringing loved ones back to their families is an unbelievable feeling," added Lancelotte. "It's why we do what we do. That day will stay with the team for the rest of our lives."

The rescue team's professionalism, teamwork, and unshakable commitment to public safety did not go unnoticed. Deputy Chief Stephen R. Calandra of the Winthrop Fire Department personally commended their efforts stating, "I am deeply grateful for their heroic actions and proud to have such a capable and dedicated team protecting our community. Their bravery and selflessness exemplify the highest standards of public service and they deserve our utmost respect and admiration."

This operation is yet another powerful reminder of the critical role that the SCSD's Marine Deputy Team plays within the Winthrop Harbormaster's Office ensuring safety on our region's waterways. Beyond law enforcement, these officers stand ready to respond to any emergency, and although often under extreme conditions, they continue to protect and save lives. Sergeant DeCarney, Captain Janielis, and Donny Lancelotte, we thank you for your service, your skills, bravery and unwavering courage. Your actions on July 12th are just one of the many rescues you've done, and it's a reminder of what it means to truly serve and a testament to the values we hold at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.





NO ONE IS IMMUNE: MEDICAID ROLLBACKS AND THE SAFETY OF OUR STREETS

Here at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, we know that the foundational elements for building public safety and the effort to achieving and sustaining safe, vibrant communities begins in homes, schools, hospitals, and clinics. That's why the passage of United States House of Representatives (HR) Bill 1—formally, “An Act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14,” now Public Law 119-21—is deeply concerning. Widely referred to as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, it carries sweeping Medicaid cuts that will gravely impact the health of successive generations.

The law enacts nearly \$840 billion in Medicaid reductions over the next decade. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects roughly 7.8 million people will lose coverage by 2034, while the Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Marketplace warns that as many as 16 million could become uninsured.

The bill also creates new barriers to keeping coverage. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services notes that eligibility must now be renewed every six months instead of annually, service fees of up to \$35 are permitted, and an 80-hour monthly work requirement applies to recipients aged 19 to 64. Many could lose coverage over missed paperwork deadlines or fluctuating work hours. For those already juggling multiple jobs, childcare, and health issues, this isn't reform; it's a trap door.

Peer-reviewed research makes the stakes plain. A recent Lancet study projects that losing Medicaid for 15.5 million people could lead to roughly 14,660 additional deaths each year among working-age adults. Analysis from Vox estimates 8,200 to 24,600 more annual deaths from provisions like work mandates and reduced provider payments. These aren't abstract statistics. They are neighbors, coworkers, and especially those returning home from correctional facilities.

Medicaid goes beyond protecting individual health, as it undergirds the very institutions we rely on when emergencies strike. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation estimates that cuts of this magnitude

could reduce state health care spending by \$80 billion in 2026, slash hospital revenues by nearly \$32 billion, and increase uncompensated care by \$6 billion. The Guardian reports rural America will be hit hardest, with \$87 billion in hospital losses over ten years and hundreds of facilities at risk of closure. But, closures won't be limited to rural towns. In Boston, community clinics serving low-income residents—many justice-involved—operate on thin margins. When they close, patients turn to already overburdened emergency rooms.

When people can't access care, law enforcement is called to tackle the spill-over.



Officers who are tasked with responding to violent crimes are often also expected to handle health emergencies and crises, welfare checks, and overdoses that could have been prevented. The U.S. Conference of Mayors warns that Medicaid cuts will raise homelessness, substance use, and psychiatric emergencies, all of which drive up demand for police and EMS services.

History shows the link. After Tennessee removed more than 170,000 adults from Medicaid in 2005, a National Bureau of Economic Research study found that crime rates rose 17 percent in two years, largely from nonviolent offenses tied to health and economic instability. Conversely, a Public Library of Science (PLOS) One study on the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion found measurable reductions in arrests across violent, drug, and low-level categories.

In Suffolk County, this connection is particularly stark. Many incarcerated individuals leave our facilities with mental health needs, substance use disorders, and/or chronic illnesses. Our reentry programs work only if people have continuous access to treatment. The National

Health Law Program reports Medicaid is often the single most important factor in stabilizing someone after release, keeping them housed, employed, and healthy. Remove that lifeline, and the threat of relapse into crime, substance use, hospitalization, or homelessness skyrockets.

The urgency for fiscal responsibility is understood. But, the CBO has found that the wealthiest households will gain an average of \$13,600 annually from other provisions of the bill, while the poorest households will lose about \$1,200, making it a 3.1% income drop. Cutting health care for the poorest while rewarding the wealthiest shifts the conversation from inequality to tangible danger. It widens the gap between those who can weather a health crisis and those for whom one diagnosis can unravel everything.

Public safety is a chain, and every broken link – whether it be a shuttered clinic, an untreated illness, or a lost job compounding medical debt – weakens the whole. Safer neighborhoods require healthier people. That means stable Medicaid funding, streamlined access, and exemptions from work requirements for people with chronic illness, mental health conditions, or caregiving duties. It means partnering with hospitals, clinics, and charitable organizations to fill the gaps this law will create, before the damage is irreversible.

Correctional institutions like ours are on the front lines of public safety, and we know that two of the most effective crime-prevention programs we have are accessible health care and education. That's why at the Suffolk County House of Correction, we have partnered with organizations like the Tufts School of Medicine's student-led Phoenix Project in the past, which offers free health information workshops to participating students to satisfy both needs. When people get the treatment they need, they are less likely to land in our jails, emergency rooms, or morgues.

With these rollbacks to public health protections, our community leaders must stand united for the good of the Commonwealth—no matter the tax bracket.

AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

SPECIAL EDITION: BACK-TO-SCHOOL

With a new school year underway, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has been active in the community, supporting students, families, and educators across the county. From resource fairs to neighborhood celebrations, our team has been proud to take part in events that highlight the importance of learning and community connection as schools open their doors once again.

In recent weeks, officers and staff have joined students and families at the Back-to-School Event at Clark Middle School on August 20, the Back-to-School BBQ & School Supply Event at Dorchester Park on August 27, and the Back-to-School Bash at Samuel W. Mason Pilot Elementary School on August 28. Our team also attended the United Neighborhood Association's Back-to-School Celebration at Mother's Rest Park in Dorchester on August 30, the Back-to-School event at Williams School Cafeteria in Chelsea on September 17, and the Curriculum & Resource Fair Night at James W. Hennigan School in Jamaica Plain on September 25. Earlier in the month, we were proud to connect with families at Immaculate



Conception School in Revere on September 6, at Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Head Start Orientation Day in Jamaica Plain on September 2, and through a Choice Program presentation to a 5th-grade class at Blackstone School on September 16. Each event brought together students, parents, educators, and community leaders, reinforcing the message that a strong school year begins with support from every corner of the community.

At these gatherings, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department was proud to contribute both materially and socially to the excitement of a new school year. Officers and staff distributed drawstring backpacks, notebooks, pencils, crayons, coloring books, toy sheriff badges, program brochures, and other essential tools to help equip students and ease the back-to-school transition for families. Just as importantly, our presence at these events underscored the Department's commitment to educational encouragement and equity, showing how law enforcement continues to stand as pillars of leadership, trust, and well-being.

Speaking to that commitment, Officer Sarah Bernie, who attended the Samuel W. Mason Pilot Elementary School evening, added that it "feels absolutely amazing." She continued: "Engaging with the faculty and parents, learning more about how we can better assist the neighborhood, and just giving back in all that we can... I'm so glad we're a part of this."

It was a privilege and an honor to attend alongside so many valued community partners, working together to ensure that every child begins the year with the resources and confidence they need. We extend our deepest thanks to the officers and staff who gave their time and energy to attend these events. Your presence matters, and especially in times of uncertainty, showing up for kids and families is one of the most meaningful commitments we can make.



SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Observe and Support
BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER, 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

WISH EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY

COLUMBUS DAY

OCTOBER 13, 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Observe and Support
NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Observe and Support
DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

October 2025

#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

WISH EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY

HALL[🍁]WEEN

OCTOBER 31, 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

WISH EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY

INDIGENOUS Peoples' DAY

OCTOBER 13, 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Wish Everyone a Happy

ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

October 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Observe and Support
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF NONVIOLENCE

PEACE BEGINS WITH US, AT SCHOOL, AT HOME, AND EVERYWHERE WE GO.

OCTOBER 2, 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Observe and Support
National Crime Prevention Month

OCTOBER 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Celebrate
NATIONAL LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH

October 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Wish Everyone a Happy

POLISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

OCTOBER 2025
#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS & THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Celebrate
WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

OCT 5TH, 2025

To our Educational Members and every Teacher in the World. Thank you for your Service!

#WEARESCSD || WWW.SCSOMA.ORG