

KNOW YOUR SHERIFF

Sheriffs make decisions every day that impact our communities—but most Massachusetts voters don't even know who their sheriff is.

It's time to change that. It's time to **Know Your Sheriff.**

THE CAMPAIGN

Know Your Sheriff is a public education campaign by the ACLU of Massachusetts to build voter awareness about the life-changing decisions that sheriffs make.

Polling shows that many voters are not familiar with sheriffs—but when they learn more, they are more likely cast a ballot for sheriff in the next election.

Knowing your sheriff means knowing that YOU have the power to demand safer communities and a more just criminal legal system.

SHERIFFS: THE BASICS

Sheriffs are elected officials who serve **six-year terms.**

There are 14 sheriffs in Massachusetts—one for each county.

Sheriffs are responsible for overseeing **county jails** and **houses of correction.**

This includes living conditions, like access to **addiction treatment** and **mental health services.**

Sheriffs can offer **educational, vocational,** and **transitional programs** to ensure people re-enter their communities in a positive way.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sheriffs serve the longest term that an elected official can serve in Massachusetts.

Sheriffs in Massachusetts are responsible for **more than half** of state's incarcerated population.

In 2016, not a single sheriff incumbent lost his seat, and only four faced challengers.

THE POLLING

A poll commissioned by the ACLU shows a **lack of knowledge** among Massachusetts voters about the roles and responsibilities of sheriffs.

- Fewer than one-in-five Massachusetts voters (**17%**) can correctly name their local sheriff.
- Nearly half (**41%**) do not know that sheriffs are elected; 90% do not know that a sheriff's term is six years.
- Only one third (**32%**) think sheriffs have a major impact on the criminal legal system.

The same poll shows that after learning more about sheriffs, voters are much **more likely to vote**—and they favor **treatment over punishment**.

- After hearing facts about the impact that sheriffs can have, **71%** of voters say they are very likely to vote in the next election for local sheriff.
- **82%** of voters indicate that being supportive of offering drug- and alcohol-use rehabilitation services is a very or extremely important quality in candidates for sheriff.
- **65%** say that providing services for mental health, drug treatment, and emotional support should be a top priority for people in jails and houses of correction.



THE ISSUES

Public health is on the ballot: Sheriffs can increase treatment opportunities for substance use disorder and mental health. They can also help control the spread of diseases like COVID by providing tests and vaccines.

Justice is on the ballot: Sheriffs can choose to respect civil rights or promote policies that split families apart.

It's time to elect sheriffs who are committed to **transformation and healing**—not punishment and retribution.

Primary Election: September 6, 2022

General Election: November 8, 2022

Please join us! Get to know your sheriff and help us spread the word at: [ACLUM.org/KnowYourSheriff](https://aclum.org/KnowYourSheriff)

