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Letter to the Editor in Response to Boston Sunday Globe article from 7/7/19: *Stopping Injustice or Putting the Public at Risk? Suffolk County DA Rachael Rollins's tactics spur pushback*
July 9, 2019

Dear Editor:

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MA Chapter, we applaud Rachael Rollins for her trailblazing efforts in needed criminal justice reform. Through mass incarceration we have developed a social structure that disproportionately harms people and communities of color by preventing populations from meeting their basic needs.

We need more leaders in decision making positions who, like DA Rollins, understand the systemic ways in which social structures disadvantage individuals, the environments that promote health disparities, and the devastating consequences this has on crime and public safety.

As social workers, through both clinical care and policy advocacy, we understand individual behavior in light of the environmental context in which that person lives. We work to alleviate the effects of poverty, mental illness, and addiction that fuel many criminal offenses. We recognize factors such as poverty, homelessness, trauma, untreated mental health, and addiction, as root causes of crime. Social workers hold a variety of roles within the criminal justice system from providing clinical care and support to victims to treating offenders and are trained holistically to understand the dualities of victim and perpetrator. We fully support DA Rollins holistic approach to prosecution and her ability to look at situations in their entirety in order to determine what is needed for safer and healthier communities. DA Rollins is not hard or soft on crime, she is smart on crime.

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