

**Annual Address:**  
**State of the Judiciary**

October 16, 2014  
Great Hall, John Adams Courthouse  
Boston, Massachusetts

*Remarks by*  
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It is a pleasure and an honor to join SJC Chief Justice Gants and Trial Court Chief Justice Carey in reporting to you today on the state of the Commonwealth's Judiciary – an honor to be partnered with two such committed, insightful, energetic leaders who are deeply passionate about the work of justice; a pleasure because this is a special moment in the history of the judicial branch, a moment of excitement, renewal and discovery and we all share the joy of that moment. We are doing much and there is still much to be done.

Specialty courts, court service centers, access to justice, new approaches to domestic violence are the headlines of innovation in the Judiciary. But for these innovations to accomplish their goals in advancing justice, there must be a foundation of powerful and supple organizational infrastructure on which they all depend. In the last two years, the development of that organizational infrastructure has advanced more rapidly than I ever would have predicted.

John Bello joined us from Massport to manage and maintain our 101 courthouses. In two years, he has transformed that operation from old-school to a state-of-the-art modern asset management enterprise. Just visit the Brooke Courthouse: the graffiti are gone; the escalator, broken for 10 years, is working away; the Court Service Center has opened, and next month, an electronic signage system will be installed to guide the public to the appropriate clerk's office and courtroom, while an electronic kiosk will provide jurors with an on-the-spot certificate of service.

Jeff Morrow came from 30 years in the Naval Criminal Investigation Service (NCIS for those of you who watch the show) to professionalize our security operations. Training for our new court officers will be six weeks long instead of the previous two weeks, and we are developing our proud court officer staff so they will, within the next few years, be nationally accredited.

In full partnership with our Clerk/Magistrates and Registers, we are strengthening the role of these critical court leaders through education and training, through providing the necessary tools for modernization of our courts, through effective accountability and through the adoption of best practices. We have always had outstanding clerks in our judicial system. The Trial Court and our clerks are commonly committed to achieving a new standard of excellence in court administration.

Our human resource and training infrastructure is expanding and modernizing. The hiring process is now automated and professionalized. We will have performed the first annual performance appraisals for all management staff by the end of this calendar year and we will do the same for all unionized staff in the coming year. Training for our staff has expanded dramatically and as of next year, three days of training annually will be required for our unionized staff. To achieve that goal, we will enter the world of online training, with mandated domestic violence training for all staff leading the way.

Advances in technology will be essential if we are to operate within our new resource constraints: 6,500 staff instead of the 8,000 of old. We recently announced formation of a new Judicial Branch Information Services to combine the resources and expertise of the Trial and Appellate Court under the leadership of Trial Court Chief Information Officer Craig Burlingame who has led the national organization on court technology.

We will complete the task of installing our comprehensive case management program, MassCourts, across the Trial Court by June. That will provide the platform for an enormous array of new technological efficiencies: electronic filing of criminal complaints by police departments, now being piloted in three courts; and e-filing for civil cases, which will begin with a three-court pilot in January.

We also are piloting an attorney's portal in Bristol County, which we hope the Bar will find helpful. The pilot allows lawyers to go online to view their cases, including all docket and event information. We expect to expand it across the state and across Trial Court departments. Soon we also expect to offer – for a small fee – an application that pushes information on scheduled events to attorneys' electronic devices. Other technology projects include digital preservation of documents, for which we will request legislative refinements this legislative session, and automated indigency verification, now underway in Probation.

These technological advances allow us to drive constant improvement of our activities based on the analysis of the data that this integrated system generates: already in collaboration with the Executive Branch we have undertaken a cost benefit analysis of various programs in Corrections, Parole and Probation – and it demonstrates that the greatest cost benefits derive from investments in Probation. Data will drive our improvements in our pre-trial practice, under the leadership of Commissioner Ed Dolan of Probation and Chief Justice Paul Dawley of the District Court. As we are able for the first time ever to measure the systemic outcomes of our activities as a justice system, we are able to ensure their effectiveness in providing justice and reducing crime across the Commonwealth.

Finally, that absolutely essential element of an effective justice system, the probation service, is truly back in action, deepening its partnership with the judiciary to develop effective, evidence-based approaches to criminality, approaches that do far more to reduce crime at lower cost than those ineffective methods we have been relying on for the past couple of decades.

That we are making such strides in so short a time is an extraordinary tribute to the people who deliver justice in Massachusetts. Truly, I thought the Judicial Branch would be the most resistant to change of any organization in my experience. The opposite has been true. The people who deliver justice needed only to be invited to join in this great enterprise of renovation and renewal. To all of you who are part of the delivery of justice in Massachusetts, I offer my gratitude and my respect.