

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

August 16, 2007

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**The MCAD Finds Probable Cause For Race Discrimination Against the  
Essex County Correctional Officers Association**

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination found Probable Cause today against the Essex County Correctional Officers Association (ECCOA) and four individually named members including Jerry Enos and K. Ricky Thompson in a complaint of race discrimination filed by the Essex County Sheriff, Frank Cousins.

Cousins filed a complaint with the MCAD on February 24, 2006 citing allegations of a racially hostile work environment and racial harassment by the Union and a number of its members. Cousins, who is African American,, alleged that the Union's website allowed postings from its union members that referred to Cousins in a racially derogatory manner, creating a hostile work environment. The website, controlled and operated by the Union, displayed these messages and statements for over a month even though the Union claimed that it reviews all postings and removes those it considers inappropriate.

The MCAD found that the ECCOA was liable for failing to properly administer the website which created a racially hostile environment and that the individual Respondents had aided and abetted in the creation of a hostile environment. The MCAD, in its investigation, also found that there was a genuine issue of material fact as to whether or not the Union and its members deliberately intended to aid in the creation of the racially hostile work environment. The matter will now proceed to conciliation and if not resolved, ultimately to an adjudicatory hearing at the agency.

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