

Twitter Thread by Dan McFadden



Dan McFadden

@Dan_McF



Yesterday, @MassAGO Maura Healey and her team issued a groundbreaking report finding that the Bristol County Sheriff's Office violated the civil rights of immigration detainees.

Let's take look at some key findings (thread

First, some background.

The BCSO is administered by Sheriff Thomas Hodgson. @GlobeAbraham has reported on his close relationship with Trump's White House. He corresponds with Stephen Miller, the notorious architect of Trump's anti-immigrant agenda.
<https://t.co/SqoPOT2v3M>

Although the BCSO is a state facility, it has also contracted with ICE to hold people detained for federal civil immigration proceedings.

<https://t.co/PbJoZVy8hL>

ICE essentially pays a per diem rate for each detainee.

In 2019, the Mass. State Auditor found that BCSO improperly failed to remit more than \$300,000 in ICE payments to the state.

<https://t.co/jRTXmsdGz0>

BCSO also has a 287(g) agreement with ICE. It allows BCSO personnel to be deputized to do some of ICE's work. ICE does not pay for their hours. It is essentially a donation of state employee time to federal immigration enforcement.

<https://t.co/3dnbxrKXtS>

In March 2020, immigration detainees at the BCSO, represented by @LCRBOSTON and others, filed a class action lawsuit.

The suit alleged "dangerous conditions" at BCSO that "will imminently result in the uncontrolled spread of COVID-19."

<https://t.co/iBNZKOWCn5>

Starting in April 2020, a federal judge conducted bail hearings and ordered the release of more than 40 civil detainees on strict conditions in order to "meaningfully reduc[e] crowding in the [BCSO] detention facility."

<https://t.co/WASWwTsA6B>

On April 16, Sheriff Hodgson, appearing on Fox News, characterized the release of these civil detainees as "ludicrous" and a "serious, serious problem."

<https://t.co/0LPgNlyIEJ>

On May 1, there was a violent incident in the BCSO's immigration detention facility. Three detainees were hospitalized.

[@ACLU_Mass](#) has filed a lawsuit for public records relating to the incident:

<https://t.co/aapx8UHYpt>

According to the lawsuit, immediately after the incident, BCSO made a series of detailed public assertions about what happened:

However, according to the lawsuit, after [@ACLU_Mass](#) requested to see the actual records of the incident (e.g., reports, video, correspondence with DHS), the BCSO suddenly reversed course and claimed that every single record of the incident should be withheld from the public.

In the meantime, according to the report, [@MassAGO](#) initiated an investigation on May 5.

The results of that investigation are two principal findings.

First, that the BCSO violated the detainees' rights by using "excessive and disproportionate" force.

Second, that the BCSO deployed chemical irritants (like pepper spray) "with deliberate indifference to a substantial risk of serious harm to the health of the detainees."

One detainee had to be revived with chest compressions. He was not taken to the hospital.

The report also contains many other deeply concerning details - more than I can list, but here are some examples.

And:

And:

And:

And:

And:

And:

The entire report is available here. It is deeply disturbing.

<https://t.co/FLKVdh2Sm4>

The Mass. AGO also filed a letter yesterday in [@ACLU_Mass's](#) public records lawsuit. The letter urges release of the underlying records of this incident.

In summary:

<https://t.co/wrAiHUErNN>

[@CvRose3](#) of [@ACLU_Mass](#) on today's [@MassAGO](#) report finding Bristol County Sheriff's Office violated the rights of civil immigration detainees: <https://t.co/NOV7Le0hHD> pic.twitter.com/NBIO1AqphY

— Dan McFadden ([@Dan_McF](#)) [December 15, 2020](#)