

**Testimony of the Honorable Edward Flynn  
Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety  
For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Before the  
Committee on Government Reform  
Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Natural Resources and  
Regulatory Affairs and the Subcommittee on National Security,  
Emerging Threats and International Relations**

**March 24, 2004**

Chairman Shays, Chairman Ose, Ranking Members and Members of both Subcommittees – Good Afternoon.

My name is Edward Flynn and I am the Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As such, I am responsible for coordinating statewide public safety efforts. These efforts include leading the Commonwealth's efforts to work with our federal, regional, and local partners to detect, prevent, respond to and manage the consequences of a terrorist attack or other catastrophic incident.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about the issue of co-location.

**Background**

I have been involved in law enforcement for over thirty-three years. In that time, I have had the opportunity to be involved in a number of initiatives that brought together individuals from different agencies to work side by side toward a common purpose. And, whether that purpose was to target international or regional drug trafficking organizations or stopping acts of terrorism through participation in a Joint Terrorism Task Force, I have personally witnessed the benefits that comes from taking individuals from different organizational cultures and co-locating them in the same office. I have personally experienced the enhanced level of institutional coordination and collaboration that evolves from the individual relationships that form through co-location. As we look to the future of fighting crime, stopping

terrorism and protecting our communities, I believe that our efforts will be enhanced by consolidating and co-locating the various regional and offices of the various independent federal entities that have been placed into the Department of Homeland Security.

### **Co-location and Information Sharing**

One of the primary benefits of co-location is that it facilitates information sharing – and it is information sharing that is the driving force behind successful crime prevention and anti-terrorism efforts.

While it would seem to be logical to assume that law enforcement entities are pre-disposed to share critical information, it should be noted that information sharing and multi agency collaboration is a relatively new concept in government – particularly in law enforcement. It is for this reason that the nation lacks both the infrastructure and the processes to guide the sharing of information critical to our efforts to stop and respond to acts of terrorism. It is also important to understand that even today, organizations typically don't share information -- individuals do. It is also important to note that neither by training nor temperament are law enforcement officers predisposed to share information with people they do not trust.

Prior to the events of 9/11, information sharing among law enforcement agencies was often times based on personal relationships. What this means is that if a police officer from one agency happened to have a good relationship with an officer from another (or even a local FBI agent), then there is a mechanism for the sharing of information about investigations and other relevant issues. Absent that type of relationship, information sharing was often more difficult.

As we all know in the months that preceded the attacks of 9/11, agencies were unable to draw a larger pattern out of disparate bits of information (contained in separate databases) about the activities of terrorists involved in the attack. We will never know whether better data sharing would have helped thwart the attacks. But we do know if we can collect terrorism related intelligence and blend it with domestic crime information we stand a better chance detecting the activities of an operational terrorist cell.

We know that terrorists often use traditional crimes such as drug trafficking, money laundering, bank robbery and illegal weapons trafficking to offset the

costs and further support their political/terrorist objectives. It stands to reason that the first indication that a terrorist cell is operating within the United States may be behavior discovered during an investigation by local police, following the report of suspicious circumstances or some type of criminal event. Whether the focus is on stopping drug trafficking or preventing an act of bio-terrorism, rapidly collecting and disseminating good information about the people who commit crime and the places where crime occurs is critical. The challenge is that currently there is no single repository for this information – nor is there one single entity within the Department of Homeland Security that has exclusive responsibility for enforcement and intelligence gathering activities relevant to our counter-terrorism efforts. In fact, much of this information is collected and stored in the data systems maintained by variety of federal, state and local organizations that includes instances in which they refused to cooperate and/or share information

With the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, many of these entities (at those within the federal government) now reside in a single federal department. When they were relocated into DHS, these agencies brought their personnel, equipment, information and resources with them. They also brought their operational culture which developed over years if not decades. So today, despite the fact that they are all part of the department of Homeland Security, there is still an environment that in many respects precludes information sharing.

As we look to the future our top priority must be to dramatically improve the flow of information among federal, state and local law enforcement entities. Arguably, there is greater recognition throughout the law enforcement community that information sharing is important and we have made some improvements in this regard in the two years since 9/11. However, we still have a ways to go before we have established a national information sharing capability that facilitates the collection, analysis and dissemination of homeland security related information so that we can better “connect the dots.”

For this information sharing model to exist, the entities responsible for protecting the homeland must operate under a shared vision – a vision that delineates and fosters an appreciation of the roles and responsibility of each level of government and each entity within each level. But beyond having a shared vision, operational entities must be deployed in a manner that supports both informal and formal information exchange. I believe that the

personal interaction that comes from co-location greatly enhances the ability of individuals from different entities to share strategic, tactical and operational information and also support multi-agency collaboration. By co-locating representatives from different entities together you establish the personal relationships that will serve as the foundation for breaking down the institutional barriers that have served to impede collaboration, coordination and information sharing. It is therefore I believe, a key part of our long term approach to homeland security.

A first step is to co-locate entities within the Department of Homeland Security. Each component of DHS must have a thorough understanding of the role and responsibility of the other components of DHS and the ability to engage in a free exchange of operational, strategic and tactical data relevant to the mission they have been charged with. I also believe that this co-location should take place not just in Washington, DC, but at the local and regional level as well. It is critical that those who are protecting our communities understand and become a part of the communities they are to protect. Down the road consideration should be given to include state and local officials in the co-located offices.

If history is any guide, there will be those who will resist efforts to change the way we do business. But if we are to be successful in confronting the challenges of our time, this change must come. We can take steps to protect our communities more effectively – whether it is from criminals or terrorists. The first step is to work together.

I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today. I am happy to answer any questions.