



The Drug Policy Forum of Massachusetts

Testimony of Whitney A. Taylor, Executive Director Drug Policy Forum of Massachusetts — June 28, 2005

In Favor of S. 1079 — An Act to Provide Proceeds of Drug Case Confiscations to Drug Treatment in front of the Judiciary Committee

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Honorable Chairs and Committee Members, I am here to testify in favor of Senator Wilkerson's bill S. 1079 on the use of seized assets for drug treatment. This legislation will be of great benefit to the Commonwealth by creating another funding stream for desperately needed drug treatment services.

In 2003, 81% of people under the supervision of the Department of Corrections have substance abuse disorders. If we are to interrupt the cycle of addiction, crime and incarceration we must have the ability to offer addiction services to those in need.

The Drug Policy Forum of Massachusetts (DPFMA) promotes the expansion of treatment services in all capacities. We believe that the most cost effective and beneficial treatment services are provided in the community before an individual's addiction causes them to commit crimes beyond their illicit substance use. However, persons who have been convicted of crimes that demand incarceration are in need of services as well. The ability of S. 1079 to expand treatment services for inmates will help curtail recidivism after release and allow individuals the opportunity to break the cycle of addiction and crime.

The concept of using funds garnered from the confiscation of illicit drug related assets is not unique, and in fact is a treatment, prevention and education funding stream used in many other states. There is a sense of justice to use assets that are directly related to illicit drug law convictions in order to pay for the treatment of those suffering from addiction. DPFMA does not want to promote asset forfeiture as a money making scheme — but when there is a conviction and assets are made available, the treatment community should receive funds to help stop the problems caused by addiction from the source.

I urge the good members of this Committee to support S. 1079 — this legislation will prove beneficial to Massachusetts both in human and fiscal savings. Thank you for the opportunity to present on this important subject.

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