

Federal Judge rules in favor of Bristol County Sheriff Hodgson in lawsuit about prisoners' rights

The Federal Court on Monday ruled in favor of the Bristol County Sheriff's Office and Securus Technologies in finding that Sheriff Hodgson acted lawfully in contracting with Securus Technologies to provide telephone service to inmates.

Two years ago, prisoners' rights activists brought suit against Sheriff Hodgson and Securus, and ran to the media to publicize their filing, generating headlines like "Lawsuit claims Sheriff Hodgson receiving kickbacks from inmate telephone calls" (Taunton Daily Gazette 5/7/18).

Dismissing all claims against the Sheriff and Securus on Monday, U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani decided that the Mass. Legislature by statute gave the Sheriff the authority to generate revenue from inmate telephone calls.

Despite the politically charged distortions of the prisoners' rights groups and political activists claiming the receipt of "illegal kickbacks," echoed in many cases by the media, all monies generated from the inmate telephone service were utilized for IT and investigatory services which supported and safeguarded the inmate telephone system. Monday's decision vindicates not only Sheriff Hodgson's actions, but those of other Sheriffs in the Commonwealth who, through ingenuity, utilized outside sources of revenue to relieve some of the burden on taxpayers.

"For years, we have had to defend ourselves from unmitigated attacks by political activists who have been non-stop accusing us of 'illegal kickbacks' and profiteering on inmate phone

calls,” Sheriff Hodgson said Tuesday. “Now, the Federal Court has unequivocally told us that our actions were proper.

“As usual, I will not hold my breath waiting for any apologies for all the hateful and defamatory comments made about the Sheriff’s Office or myself,” Sheriff Hodgson continued. “Rather, the BCSO will continue to provide top-notch care and custody to the inmates and the community it serves while insuring that every effort is made to minimize the burden on taxpayers.”