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MAJOR COUNTY SHERIFFS OF AMERICA HOLDS AWARD CEREMONY AT WINTER CONFERENCE

Honors were given to the 2023 winners of the Sandra S. Hutchens Sheriff of the Year Award and MCSA Legislative Initiative Champion in Washington, DC

On February 9, 2024, the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), held its Winter Conference Awards ceremony to honor leaders who are advancing modern law enforcement across the country. The following awards were given out during a ceremony attended by MCSA member sheriffs, federal law enforcement partners, and corporate partners who support MCSA. Motorola Solutions sponsored the ceremony and assisted in presenting the awards to the recipients. The awards given reflect the efforts of the honorees for the previous year.

2023 Sandra S. Hutchens MCSA Sheriff of the Year

The recipient of the 2023 Sandra S. Hutchens MCSA Sheriff of the Year is Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, Massachusetts. He was nominated by fellow MCSA Sheriffs and was selected as the winner by the Nominations and Awards Committee, chaired by Sheriff Rosie Rivera of Salt Lake County, Utah. Sheriff Koutoujian joined the MCSA Executive Board as Vice-President in 2018 and rose to the position as MCSA President in 2020. For the last two years, he has continued to serve the association as the Immediate Past President. Under Sheriff Koutoujian's leadership, MCSA became a powerful voice for the nation's sheriffs especially in the space of advancing medically assisted treatment programming in correctional facilities, professional leadership development for law enforcement executives, and voicing promising practices for innovative criminal justice reform.

"It is the honor of my lifetime to be recognized by my peers with this award," said Sheriff Koutoujian. "MCSA is a collective of some of the most talented and visionary leaders in this country, and to be chosen by them as Sheriff of the Year is a tremendous distinction. This association has allowed us to share best practices, grow each other's set of knowledge and expertise, and lift up the profession as a whole. I am grateful to my fellow sheriffs for their leadership and friendship over these many years."

"Across the country, Sheriff Koutoujian is a recognized and respected leader in law enforcement," said MCSA Executive Director Megan E. Noland. "This association advanced under Sheriff Koutoujian's leadership due to his unique skillset with a background as a prosecutor, legislator, and law enforcement leader. The imprint he has left on his colleagues and law enforcement will be felt for many years to come. We are grateful for his tenure on the MCSA Executive Board, and we look forward to his continued involvement in our ongoing efforts to advance the law enforcement profession."

This award is named in the honor of former MCSA President and Orange County, California Sheriff Sandra S. Hutchens who was a champion and leader for the Major County Sheriffs of America. Sheriff Hutchens passed away in 2021, and we recognize her service to this organization with presenting this award in her honor.

2023 MCSA Legislative Initiative Champion

The recipient of the 2023 MCSA Legislative Initiative Champion Award is Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA).

Senator Cassidy received the MCSA Legislative Initiative Champion for his legislative efforts and dedication to improve healthcare for individuals involved in the criminal justice system. His sponsorship of the *Due Process Continuity of Care Act* will work to ensure pre-trial detainees are not removed from Medicaid prior to being convicted of a crime.

"I am proud to stand with sheriffs across the country to ensure those who have not been found guilty of a crime see their rights protected," said Dr. Cassidy.

“As law enforcement continues to deal with a severe mental health and substance use problem, we need more tools to offer those incarcerated the best chance at a successful transition back into the community,” said MCSA Vice President of Government Affairs, Sheriff Michael J. Bouchard, of Oakland County, MI. “Senator Cassidy’s efforts are appreciated very much in the law enforcement community in order to ensure proper care of incarcerated individuals and help support the burden of medical care placed on jails and correctional facilities. We are very grateful for his efforts.”

MCSA is grateful to each award recipient; it is humbling to honor those who have had unwavering support for law enforcement in the past year. We look forward to working with each award winner in the future to build upon our relationship and passion for moving the policing profession ahead.

*The **Major County Sheriffs of America** is a professional law enforcement association of the largest Sheriff’s Offices in the country representing counties or parishes with a population of 500,000 or more. We are dedicated to preserving the highest integrity in law enforcement and the elected Office of the Sheriff. Our membership represents over 130 million citizens.*

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