

**Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in
the Criminal Justice System**

**07/21/08 Meeting
MINUTES**

Persons in Attendance:

Judge Harper, Judge Jones, Deborah Fuller, Kevin Kane, Susan Storey, Judith Rossi, Preston Tisdale, Jeanne Milstein, Maureen Price-Boreland, Merva Jackson, Fran Carino Andrew Moseley, Christopher Arciero, Donald Green, Glenn Cassis, Leo Arnone, Pat Hynes, Rep. William Dyson, Hakima Bey-Coon, Andrew Clark and Aileen Keays.

Meeting commenced at approximately 12:30 pm

I. Welcome – Judge Harper

Welcome by Judge Harper followed by member introductions

II. Report on the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts’ spring conference – Judge Jones

- Judge Jones presented on the Consortium’s history as well as their most recent meeting in Washington.
 - The Consortium is a coalition of organizations, government and non-government, from 30 + states including D.C.
 - The Consortium began in 1988 when four states: NY, NJ, MI and WA met in NY and decided to form a coalition to promote racial fairness in the courts.

- Professor Jerry Kang of UCLA’s School of Law presented at this year’s conference on implicit bias.
 - They have a website with an implicit bias test which is intended to reveal hidden biases that people are unaware they have. The site is:
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
 - People should be very humbled by their findings; our country places biases on us and we need to be conscious of them.

- National Center for State Courts, a non-profit center with many offices (the two main ones in Arlington and Denver), has the largest library on judicial administration in the world.
 - Its mission is to advance the elimination of perceived racial and ethnic bias in the nation’s courts activities by encouraging the highest courts of each state to create commissions to ensure equal treatment without regard for race or ethnicity.

 - They host an annual forum to share research and program activities of various states in countering racial & ethnic bias, as well as to develop a national agenda for educating the courts and public on ethnic and racial fairness

Topics of this year's conference were:

- Diversity, privilege, oppression & leadership
- The Densho project: preserving Japanese-American history
- Knowing our Arab, Muslim and Sikh neighbors
- The Latino family in our society
- Hate-free zone and quest for diversity, justice and peace
 - Hate-free zones were discussed and nicknamed "America One" – primarily Hispanic-driven and mainly in WA. Their effort is chiefly education at this point.
- Interaction with American-Indian tribal courts
- Issues in law school admissions
- Need for racial and ethnic fairness commissions

Reports were presented from constituent commissions throughout the three-day conference

- The Office of Civil Rights presented on current issues such as the Jena 6
 - They also revealed a secret executive branch of their office that responds to areas of disarray to try to diffuse conflict.
 - This secret branch also responds to complaints.
- The Red Project in NY was also highlighted during the conference. It's a program for recently arrested youth that offers them assistance with school, employment, etc.; if they successfully complete the program than their charges are dropped.
 - This project was highlighted during last year's conference in Brooklyn; the project is a Consortium-supported effort.
- Affiliated with the Warren Project, now called the Racial and Ethnic Fairness Project
 - Looking at best practices throughout the U.S. for racial and ethnic fairness
 - Has staff and funding

Strategic Plan

The Consortium had money left over following this last conference and decided to use that money to create a strategic plan which it hoped to accomplish in 6 months.

The strategic plan has been commissioned by the National Center for State Courts at the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center

- Created four working groups:
 - annual meeting
 - promotion and outreach
 - program development & support
 - organization management & effectiveness

National Center for State Courts has a counterpart at the National Level

Other

CT is among five states invited to participate in a study by the Judicial Branch looking at their civil cases to determine if outcomes are the result of a racial bias

- Going to choose a cohort of cases that match demographically, then will follow them through the court process to the outcome to determine whether there's a racial difference.

III. Update on planning for our October 22, 2008 conference - Aileen Keays

- a. Reviewed the draft agenda handed out to members
 - Judge Harper's introduction of the keynote should detail what CT is doing and how it ties into the information for the rest of the day.
 - For the urban vs. suburban policing break-out session, should invite the Chief of the Glastonbury police.
 - For the break-out on the effect of the war on drugs, Lorenzo Jones would be a good speaker. May also want to look at the Sentencing Project report – may find someone from that, such as Marc Mauer.
 - Ed Joyner added to the break-out on the educational system's role
 - The break-out on the impact of unemployment should be changed to something like "Previous incarceration and unemployment: the impact on the criminal justice system"
 - Find someone who had been in that situation: Merva or Jeanne may be able to
 - Pat - panel on underlying causes/systems that infiltrate CJ system
 - For the break-out with inner-city police chiefs, invite the new Chief in New Haven
 - Remove the break-out with an undetermined topic that Dr. Joyner was to speak at; he has been included in the educational system break-out
 - b. Requested title suggestions be e-mailed to Deb Fuller
 - c. Requested afternoon break-out moderator suggestions be e-mailed to Deb Fuller
 - d. Requested lists of potential invitees from Commission members
- Recently received confirmation that Professor Charles J. Ogletree, Jr., professor at Harvard Law School, founder and executive director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, will be our keynote speaker.
 - Ogletree spoke at ECSU in March on fatherhood, Jena 6, young people, mentorship and service: want to be sure not to duplicate the message
 - Make sure he is given info on CT's issues so he can speak knowledgeably about CT.
 - Jeanne Milstein has some data to give Ogletree – maybe her office can do a quick study for him

Discussion:

- Suggested break-out session “Cradle to Prison Pipeline” – the impact of the child welfare system on the prison population
- A more focused title for the conference may help focus the day, the keynote and give context to the break-outs
- Suggested the Commission try to help the community get to the conference
 - Get the word out to local organizations, churches, etc
 - Possibly assist with transportation of residents
- For the Media panel – look at the Justice Policy Center at Georgetown
 - Anne Marie will get the name of someone to contact there
- Need a professor or researcher to discuss the media’s influence on the perceptions of racial and ethnic groups
 - Possibly Stan Simpson at Quinnipiac – Courant writer and professor
- Children’s Defense Fund – prison pipeline/Latino issue
 - Merva will follow-up
- On the invitation, clarify that this event will result in attendees leaving with specific strategies for outcome
- Audience: CJ professionals and public
- Members were invited to e-mail suggestions on the conference title, panelists and moderators to Deb.

IV. Update from CCSU on the Waterbury PAL evaluation – Aileen Keays

- ISCJ has met several times with the Waterbury P.D., this most recent time to discuss the potential for the Commission, through the ISCJ, to evaluate their PAL program.
- ISCJ has begun to identify the evaluations make-up:
 - The goal is to assess the effectiveness of Waterbury’s PAL program by comparing PAL participants to those who are not in the program.
 - The ISCJ also wants to know *how* the program produced the presumed changes. Has PAL changed the youths’ perception of law enforcement? Has the PAL program allowed them to think about their future?
 - Ultimately, we will provide a detailed statistical analysis as well as interview PAL participants to determine how the program has or has not affected them.
 - The method is through school and police data.
 - At the schools: grades, truancy, graduation and the desire for more education.
 - Through police record: how many PAL participants get involved in the criminal justice system, and for what offenses?
 - Hope to break the results down by neighborhood as well: to compare the number of youth from the higher crime areas that are and are not engaged in PAL that end-up involved in the criminal justice system.
 - Comparison group will be the youth with similar demographics that do not participate in PAL.
 - Some of the officers just returned from a PAL conference where they made contacts with officers from other areas with quite diverse PAL programs. We are looking into the feasibility and usefulness of comparing the Waterbury PAL program to those of similar cities with different programs.

- Proposal approved by the Sergeant overseeing aspects of the PAL program; waiting any suggestions or feedback from the Crime Analyst before meeting again.
- We have also conducted a Literature Review of previous evaluations of PAL programs throughout the country to offer us a background on their findings and methods for study.

Discussion:

- Were PAL youth treated differently than non-PAL youth by the criminal justice system?
- Were grades better?
- Are there specific characteristics of Waterbury that make it easier to do this PAL program there than if replicated elsewhere?

V. Other business

None

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:45 pm