

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2021

2:00 – 3:30

Virtual Meeting via WebEx

Commission members in attendance: Justice Lubbie Harper, Jr. (Chair), Alex Tsarkov (Majority Leader of the House), Amonda Hannah (DOC), Carleton Giles (BOPP), Claud Chong (COPD), Gail Hardy (DCJ), Hakima Bey-Coon (OVA), David McGuire (Majority Leader of Senate), Chief Ridenhour (CT Police Chiefs Association), Preston Tisdale (Governor), Scott Jones (President Pro Temp of Senate), Sharon Cheeks (Governor), Cheryl Sharp (CEO), Jodi Hill-Lilly (DCF).

Non-members present: Troy Brown (Judicial-CSSD), Esther Harris (Judicial), Andrew Clark (Contractor – IMRP), Aileen Keays (Contractor – IMRP).

- I. Welcome**
 - a. Meeting commenced at approximately 2:05pm
- II. Review and approve minutes from Jan meeting**
 - a. Commissioner Carlton Giles moved to approve, approved unanimously via voice vote.
- III. Summary of PTATF Community Listening Sessions – Andrew Clark, IMRP**
 - a. Listening sessions began in Sept with general listening sessions and then in Nov., began to focus on young adults followed by minors. Co-sponsors included NAACP youth and college division, local Universities, CTJJA, this Commission, and some others. Youth included those on the disability spectrum, youth of racial and ethnic minority, etc. A lot of youth focused on school resource officers, those on the disability spectrum discussed misunderstanding on officers' part and fear amongst those on the spectrum. Youth from CTJJA advocated for SROs to either be removed from schools or have their roles changed whereas youth from Hartford discussed the value of having security in their schools. A recurrent theme of the sessions might be considered a disconnect between the portrayal in the media and reality. A perceived fear which leads to distance. Youth are much more engaged with their world than presumed and youth want to participate in solutions
- IV. Discussion of January's Police Accountability & Leadership Panel**
 - a. What action might the commission take with the information shared by law enforcement?
 - i. The Commission has a responsibility to educate people about some of the challenges that LE face. If people understand how budgets are crafted then

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they could lobby their municipal leaders to dedicate more funding to LE for discretionary purposes to permit efforts by chiefs to remedy challenges with community engagement.

- ii. Commission could work to encourage racial and ethnic minority youth to join LE as a profession.
- iii. Should this commission consider hosting a conference to educate the community on some of the challenges that some police officers face? Separate from the “bad actors” in LE, of course.
- iv. Encourage training on the history of strained relations between communities of color, particularly the African-American community, and policing (and subsequent lack of accountability) in POST. It could also include some conversation on the strained relations between racial and ethnic minority officers and the profession. PTATF is looking at this issue as part of its charge. It would be great to connect on that as the work progresses.
- v. The commission will seek to host an event on the history of black policing in America and the challenges and successes experienced. Product of the event would be an action plan – educate, discuss, action plan. Will develop a structure to present to the group. Seek to invite retired black law enforcement. Connect with CGA work group on policing which includes a lot of black police officers. Chief Ridenhour believes he could get a few co-sponsors including NOBLE. Freddy Abrams is another to reach out to. History with consent decrees in major urban areas

V. Updates on other commissions, committees and task forces

- a. *Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC)* – Judicial/CSSD
 - a. JJPOC RED Workgroup Update – Judicial/CSSD
 - i. Documenting of pedestrian stops by police proposal
 - ii. CTJJAC has changed its name to CT Justice Alliance
 - b. [Racial Profiling Prohibition Project \(CTRP3\)](#) – IMRP
 - a. CTRP3 met last month to discuss potential legislation on the collection of pedestrians stop data. The advisory board’s Policy Work Group will explore the topic and report back in April.
 - b. The advisory board completed a document outlining its recommendations regarding a primary and secondary traffic stop system. The document was provided to the PTATF for its consideration.
 - c. CTRP3 anticipates having a complete 2020 dataset by the end of March. It is expecting to see a significant drop (likely more than 50%) in total traffic stops in 2020, largely attributed to COVID.
 - d. Ken Barone testified at the U.S. House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit 1st hearing of 2021 on Examining Equity in Transportation Safety Enforcement. The subcommittee is considering how NHTSA’s traffic

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safety grants could be targeted to encourage states to combat racial profiling in traffic enforcement.

- e. Will invite Ken to present during the May meeting.
- c. [CT Sentencing Commission](#) (CSC) – IMRP
 - a. Proposed several bills to the legislature.
 - i. Sentence modification statutes has a hearing this week
 - ii. Proposal to shrink drug-free zones from 1500ft to 200ft has a hearing Wed
 - iii. A bill that would expand voting rights to people on parole has a public hearing this week. CSC is supporting that legislation.
 - a. [Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force](#) (PTATF) – IMRP
 - i. See above

VI. Other business

- a. None

VII. Meeting adjournment

- a. Preston Tisdale made a motion to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded by Sharon Cheeks, the meeting concluded at 2:47.

2021 Meeting Schedule

January 11th

March 8th

May 10th

July 12th

September 13th

November 8th

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