

**Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in
the Criminal Justice System
01/14/08 Meeting**

MINUTES

Persons in attendance:

Judge Harper, Deb Fuller (Judicial), Fran Carino (DCJ), Eric Crawford (CREC), Bill Rosenbeck (DCF), Werner Oyanadel (LPRAC), Gary Roberge (Judicial), Shoshanna Silverberg (ACLU-CT), Preston Tisdale (OCPD), Judith Rossi (CSA), Andrew Moseley (BOPP), Michelle Cruz (OVA), Maureen Price-Boreland (CPA), Bill Dyson (CGA), CCSU faculty Andrew Clark, Ronald Fernandez, Shamir Ratansi, Aileen Keays, and CCSU student worker Miguel Sazo.

Meeting commenced at approximately 12:45pm

I. Welcome – Judge Harper

II. Introduction of CCSU Team

- Background of ISCJ by Andrew Clark.
- CCSU team introduces themselves and shares background relative to the work of the Commission.

III. Briefing of the Police Chiefs' Meeting and Discussion of Future Activities – Deb Fuller

- Judge Harper and Deb Fuller met with Chief Roberts of Hartford, Chief Ortiz of New Haven and Chief Norwood of Bridgeport at the end of November.
- The chiefs were found to be very progressive and interested in finding alternatives to arrest, and had many initiatives to keep children out of the criminal justice system.

Discussion:

- Possible methods for assisting the chiefs with their diversion programs.
 - Will look into institutionalizing their efforts and informing them of the available services and funds that may assist them.
- ***Commission members voted unanimously to offer official support to the chiefs' efforts.***

IV. Update on the Connecticut Sentencing Task Force – Deb Fuller

- The Task Force created four subcommittees including a Disparity subcommittee. Four recommendations of the Disparity subcommittee have been put into the Interim Report, yet not voted on because the two Chairs of the subcommittee were absent from the last full Task Force meeting. The four recommendations are:
 - To create a permanent sentencing commission
 - This permanent commission shall work in concert with established workgroups including those reviewing racial disparity
 - The permanent commission shall continue community outreach
 - The commission should study the disparate impact of crime on victims

V. Update on the Governor’s Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force (GSPRTF) – Maureen Price-Boreland

Side note:

- Ms. Price-Boreland wanted to thank Sherry Haller for the contribution that she made.
- ***Commission members voted unanimously to send a thank you letter to Ms. Haller for her contributions.***

Governor’s Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force Update:

- During the earlier meetings, a member had recommended abolishing parole. However, as GSPRTF continued to meet, it received a lot of information through presentation and discussion that informed GSPRTF that in fact, people on parole have a lower recidivism rate.
 - Moved GSPRTF toward making more effective suggestions.

The Governor’s Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force created six subgroups:

1. Board of Pardons and Parole – Recommended hiring five full-time parole staff (to commence around July) and to develop a risk assessment test
2. Information Technology – Discussed the state DoIT (Department of Information Technology) group.
 - a. Will hire a consultant to review DoIT and make suggestions if necessary.
3. Victims – Wanted to develop a more holistic definition of victims.
 - a. Purpose: if a crime is committed, the victim may not only be the direct victim but also a child that may have witnessed it or in some way was affected by it.
 - b. For some services providers, in order to receive services you must have suffered a physical injury.
4. Special Populations group – Discussed the lack of adequate resources for sex offenders and the need to expand services.

5. Re-entry group – Recommended an expansion of centers and intervention services
6. Sentencing Statutes - Recommended that someone entering an occupied home with a weapon, and not just a deadly weapon, be a class A felony.

VI. Update on Other Legislative Matters

Special session will either be Jan 22 or 23rd.

VII. Update on the Chief Justice's Public Service and Trust Commission – Deb Fuller

- Hand-out “Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity – October 29, 2007 & November 19, 2007” is a summary of the focus group.
- Conducted a survey of people that use the court system and found an 81.7% satisfaction rate
 - Considered not high enough; must be at least high 80's.

Created five committees:

1. Access
2. Accountability
3. Delivery of services
4. Collaboration
5. Changing demographics.

Currently working on strategies, outcome goals, etc.

VIII. Other Business

Preston Tisdale would like for the Commission to review disparity in sentencing, particularly the death penalty. Study conducted by Jon Jay W. Donahue III of Yale.

- Study discusses CT and its sentencing practices based on race.
- The clearing rate of murder cases has decreased since the death penalty returned.
- Study offers template for reviewing aspects of our system. Provides template for a way to analyze those issues.
- Would like the paper distributed and discussed.

Discussion:

- Possible bias in the study.

Judge Harper will review the study and at next meeting may discuss if the study has importance/relevance to our role.

Adjourned 2:38pm