

**Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in  
the Criminal Justice System  
05/19/08 Meeting**

**MINUTES**

*Persons in Attendance:*

Judge Harper (Chairman), Kevin Kane (Chief State's Attorney), Judith Rossi (Office of the Chief State's Attorney), Preston Tisdale (Office of the Chief Public Defender), Glenn Cassis (African American Affairs Commission), Merva Jackson (AFCAMP), Maureen Price-Boreland (CPA), Fran Carino (Office of the Chief State's Attorney), Hakima Bey-Coon (Office of the Victim Advocate), Werner Oyanadel (Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission), Chris Arciero (Department of Public Safety), Rev. John Henry Scott, III, Andrew Moseley (Board of Pardons and Parole), Ann-Marie DeGraffenreidt (Department of Children and Families), Donald R. Green (Assistant Attorney General), Deborah Fuller (Judicial), Aileen Keays (ISCJ/CCSU), Andrew Clark (ISCJ/CCSU), Ronald Fernandez (ISCJ/CCSU), Lyndsay Ruffolo (ISCJ/CCSU).

Meeting initiated at approximately 12:40pm

**I. Welcome – Judge Harper**

Item four was removed from the agenda because the reports to be discussed are the subject of pending litigation.

**II. CCSU – Review of activities and project update – Aileen Keays**

- Meeting with the Waterbury Police Chief
  - Review of the Waterbury PAL (Police Activities League) program.
  - Chief O'Leary would like to have an evaluation conducted to determine whether a correlation existed between a reduction in youth crime rate and an increase in youth services.

*Discussion:*

- Implications of the Commission conducting an evaluative study of the Waterbury police Chiefs' PAL program.
  - Should the Commission do an assessment in all districts (Waterbury, Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport) to determine which has replication implications.
  - *CCSU will follow-up on evaluation of PAL in Waterbury.*
- Could the Commission act as liaison between departments to share information regarding what has worked? What challenges needed to be considered?
  - One idea would be to formulate focus groups to try to build solutions; therefore, ideas are coming from a collective group.
- Bridgeport is forming a 501(3)(c); should be able to accept donations soon.

- Student Worker
  - ISJC just hired a Student Worker to work full-time, on behalf of the Commission, for the Bridgeport Police Chief to assist the Chief with his youth initiatives during the summer.
- Website Training
  - Aileen Keays successfully completed the one-day DOIT Portal Training and will now be able to edit the REDCJ website
  - The REDCJ website can be found on the state website in the drop-down box on the left, under “State Agencies”.

### III. Legislative Update

- S.B. 704, *An Act Concerning the Release, Sale and Accuracy of Conviction Information*
  - Consumer reporting agencies that provide background check information to potential employers purchase conviction information from the Judicial Branch and use it to create a criminal record database. They have been keeping and releasing historical information on Not Guilties, Nolles and Dismissals, information which the court and other criminal justice agencies are statutorily prohibited from releasing. Last year a bill sponsored by Senator Looney to address this situation passed, but it was unworkable. This year, Judicial worked with the proponents to craft workable language, which was included in S.B. 704. The bill passed. It requires the reporting agencies to buy updated criminal information every month and to use only the most recent information. The reporting agency will also get information on dismissals and other actions so they can erase old information.
- S.B. 694, *An Act Concerning Erasure of Criminal Records*
  - S.B. 694 deals with nolles of criminal counts in cases where multiple counts have been charged: if two counts were nolled but there was a conviction on one, the nolles were showing up as part of the publicly disclosable conviction information. S.B. 694 prohibits the nolles from being disclosed to the public when the information is given out electronically by the Judicial Branch.
- H.B. 5933, *An Act Concerning the Compensation of Wrongfully Convicted and Incarcerated Persons, the Duties and Duration of the Sentencing Task Force and the Preparation of Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements*, passed. It extends the duration of the Sentencing Task Force to January 2009, and also requires that racial and ethnic impact statements must be provided on certain bills.
- H.B. 5877, *An Act Concerning Probation*, passed. It was a recommendation of the Sentencing Task Force to reduce probation to three years unless extended by the judge.

- S.B. 671, *An Act Concerning Persistent Dangerous Felony Offenders and Providing Additional Resources to the Criminal Justice System*, passed and was signed by Governor Rell. It requires longer sentences for persistent dangerous offenders, and also provides additional funding for prosecutors, court staff, public defenders, etc..
- Bills that did not pass:
  - The Court Operations bill, the CSSD bill, the sex offender registration bills and the DNA bills all died.

**IV. Discussion of reports distributed at the last meeting** *(removed)*

**V. Update on the October Conference**

The conference is currently scheduled for October 22, 2008 in Alumni Hall of the Student Center at CCSU from 8:30-4. Alumni Hall has a maximum capacity of 400 people.

- Possible keynote speakers
  - Charles J. Ogletree, Jr. of Harvard University (brief bios were distributed)
  - Bernard Harcourt of University of Chicago (brief bios were distributed)
- Other speakers

*Discussion*

- Preston Tisdale's suggested speakers:
  - Charles Ogletree
  - Douglas Blackmen who wrote "Slavery by Another Name" which is a book on the development of the Criminal Justice system and its relationship with African-Americans. How much of the system developed out of the South to control the African-Americans.
  - The Guardians' Delacy Davis. The Guardians is an African-American law enforcement group. Mr. Davis directs most of his speaking to police officers and circumstances.
- Merva Jackson suggested:
  - Panel of former offenders
  - Judge Bell from New Orleans. Post-Hurricane Katrina he changed the system and hired many ex-offenders and has found great success.
- Ron Fernandez suggested:
  - Aspira be involved, a non-profit devoted to the education and leadership development of Latino youth.

- Workshops/discussion
  - Judge Harper would like the conference to include a lot of interaction and communication, not too much lecturing.

*Discussion:*

- A general discussion of the conference ensued.
- A small subcommittee will be formed to work on structuring and organizing the conference.

**VI. Other business**

- OPM is sponsoring an event to try to eliminate the lack of understanding and collaboration between agencies within the state. The two dates are July 10<sup>th</sup> and Sept 4<sup>th</sup>, each involving approximately 400 employees. The July 10<sup>th</sup> event will be held at Southern CT State University, with the Sept 4<sup>th</sup> event at the Hartford Convention Center. The goal is to have an interactive two-day event to learn about each other's duties and efforts in the hopes of promoting collaboration between state agencies and maybe some non-for-profit groups.
- For the joint training of prosecutors and defense attorneys on racial disparity in the criminal justice system, Judge Harper would like CCSU to meet with Kevin Kane and Susan Storey to begin to discuss a potential curriculum.

Adjourned 1:42pm