

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

Meeting Minutes

January 9, 2023

2:00 – 4:00

Virtual via WebEx

Commission members present: Justice Lubbie Harper Jr. (Chair), Patrick Ridenhour (Representative of Municipal Police Chiefs), Gail Hardy (Office of the Chief State Attorney), Alex Tsarkov (Majority Leader of the House), Denise Drummond (CWCSEO), Cheryl Sharp (CHRO), Sharon Cheeks (Governor), Sarah Eagan (Office of the Child Advocate), Werner Oyanadel (CWCSEO), Carlton Giles (BOPP).

Non-commission members present: Aileen Keays (UConn IMRP), Deb Fuller (UConn IMRP), Irvine Peck's-Agaya (UConn IMRP), Troy Brown (Judicial/CSSD), Ken Barone (UConn IMRP), Andrew Clark (UConn IMRP).

I. Welcome

- a. Meeting commenced at approximately 2:06pm
- b. Special welcome to Deb Fuller

II. Review and approve minutes from November meeting

- a. Motion made to approve by Chief Ridenhour, seconded by Sharon Cheeks, approved via unanimous vote.

III. Review and approve biennial report

- a. Motion made to approve by Chief Ridenhour, seconded by Gail Hardy, Troy Brown abstained, approved via vote.

IV. Updates on other commissions, committees, and task forces

- a. *Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC)* – Aileen Keays, IMRP on behalf of Tow Youth Justice Institute
 - i. Aileen read a statement, provided by Brittany LaMarr of The Tow Youth Justice Institute at UNH, which staffs the JJPOC. JJPOC has been busy finalizing its annual report and recommendations. On 12/3/22, JJPOC members received the draft 2023 report and recommendations to review and provide feedback on by 1/4/23. JJPOC is in the process of reviewing feedback from individuals, state agencies, and OPM with the chairs of workgroups, to finalize the recommendations that JJPOC members will vote on January 19th. JJPOC's voting meeting will be virtual and in-person at the LOB, 1/19/23 at 2pm.
- b. [*CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Project*](#) (CTRP3) – Ken Barone, IMRP

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- i. Released the 2020 final report last November. Initial analyses were done one year prior but spent time doing follow-up work with identified departments. CTRP3 no longer releases the final report until all follow up has concluded.
 - ii. Shared preliminary findings for 2021. Traffic stops significantly declined in 2020 and have largely continued to decline. Trend for racial and ethnic disparities also continues to decline, even as applying more stringent tools to assess for disparities. CTRP3 is beginning a deep dive in Wethersfield. Since it is under new leadership, advancements have arguably been made. The Task Force will work with the town to assess those, and work to continue progressive achievements. Will also work with Hartford Police. CTRP3 intends to release the full report in spring, with Wethersfield and Hartford discussed.
 - iii. State police audit – CTRP3 unanimously passed a motion to request state police provide data to permit a full audit. State police complied with the request and November 30th, CTRP3 received that data. Audit is almost complete. CTRP3 has two separate teams auditing data due to the sensitivity and importance of this issue – one team at Northeastern University and the other in UConn. Both ran the same audit using slightly different methodologies to validate findings. Have assessed data 62 different ways to ensure reliability of findings. Plan to share findings with state police in the coming weeks before the advisory board and the public. Probably mid/end February findings will be released to public.
- c. [CT Sentencing Commission](#) (CSC) – Alex Tsarkov, Commissioner, Director of CSC
- i. Sending a major proposal to the Rules Committee on cash bonds.
 - ii. [CSC will send 4 legislative proposals to the General Assembly:](#)
 1. The biggest proposal is to expand the age of eligibility for juvenile parole hearings. This proposal would extend the age from 18 to 21.
 2. Permit more judicial discretion with mandatory minimums sentencing in certain motor vehicle offenses
 3. Expansion of Desmond’s Law to provide court advocates for all animals. Attorneys will be able to advocate pro bono on behalf of an animal victim in court.
 4. Fixes statute on sexual assault 4 that has to do with bestiality and necrophilia. Both are illegal in CT but the language in the statutes is ineffective, so this is a technical bill to fix the language.
- d. [Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force](#) (PTATF) – Andrew Clark, IMRP

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- i. 911/211 Study – IMRP at UConn is finalizing its report, which will be released by the end of January 2023.
- ii. SRO Study – WCSU completed its [study](#) on The Role and Impact of School Resource Officers in Connecticut.

V. Discussion of the CREDCJS conference on policing

- a. Deb Fuller has returned to the Commission and will take the lead on planning the conference.
- b. Discussion – Want to discuss topic and structure (virtual/hybrid/in-person, one-day, several shorter days, etc.).
 - i. Timing – Late spring/early June may be best, considering COVID. This will be one to ‘wet the pallet’ to entice folks to continue to engage as the Commission hosts a series. This will be one in a series.
 - ii. Audience – law enforcement is the primary target but want diverse group. Explore ability to invite recruits at CT academies
 - iii. Method – Will lose people if virtual. In-person is preferred and need a big draw – a big name. Hybrid could capture more attendance. UConn/Harford Public Library could accommodate hybrid in its large community room - about 100 in-person. Could also record it to permit rebroadcast for those unable to attend.
 - iv. Main focus – Reimagining policing may be too narrow a topic to draw enough people. Maybe it could be a workshop or two, but also have some meaningful content for prosecutors, public defenders, community, probation, etc. Need a general umbrella topic within which these subtopics fall. ‘Reimagining the criminal justice system from beginning to end – where do I fit in?’.
 - v. Dr. Boyd remains a desired keynote
 - vi. Potential Subtopics:
 1. Police Accountability Bill – what did it do? What has happened since? What remains to be done?
 2. [Truth and Reconciliation](#) – Instituted during Pres Obama. Local law enforcement with local community leaders to look at historical nature of policing and how it impacted communities, and the needs of police in evolving society but considering history of policing. Yale played a big part in it. Could maybe find national speakers who are local, and could speak to the power of that type of engagement in local communities.
 3. Procedural Justice – has become a big topic and is a great training program that police have started to embrace. It would be helpful to have discussion on what it is, do we want it here, do we embrace it,

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does it apply to other related work we do? Those people are at Yale, too.

4. Models that incorporate social workers and mental health professionals. Isabel Logan at Eastern has been doing this for a while.
 5. Give departments some time to highlight their successful efforts to reduce disparities in traffic enforcement. There are now several social justice courses as part of basic police academy that we could inform the public about. This is new – never would have happened 15 yrs ago.
 6. What are the challenges of working in a system that is trying to eliminate disparities, when that goes against how things have been done for 100s of years? What tools and tips can be provided to help shift this system?
 7. International models? Norway – increased female correction officers leading to positive result(?)
 8. Where do kids fit in? School districts relying on police to respond to children in behavior or mental health crises? The racial disparities there are significant. Can we involve educational professionals in this discussion?
- c. Could we get a law enforcement association to co-sponsor the conference?
 - i. NOBLE – CT Chapter could be interested in co-sponsoring event
 - d. Professional credits embedded within conference topics/workshops
 - i. Explore POST credits for law enforcement. Arrangements can be made with Dr. Boyd for officers to use his talk for credits. Discuss with POST council – Chief Riddick is part of that
 - ii. Legal education units (LEU) are required continuing education for attorneys. It would be great if we could offer those credits for the participation of attorneys.
 - e. Will create a small planning committee to work with Deb on planning the event.

VI. Other business

- a. In Oct 2021, Sharon became a zoning enforcement officer and is now chief of zoning enforcement. Believes can now participate in more meetings.

VII. Meeting adjournment

- a. Meeting concluded at approximately 3:05pm

2023 Meeting Schedule

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Commission meets every other month on the 2nd Monday at 2pm

January 9, 2023

March 13, 2023

May 8, 2023

July 10, 2023

September 11, 2023

November 13, 2023