

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2023

2:00 – 3:30

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), Preston Tisdale (Governor), Cheryl Sharp (CHRO), Werner Oyanadel (CWCSEO), Carlton Giles (BOPP), Claud Chong (COPD), Monica Rams (Commissioner of Children and Families), Hakima Bey-Coon (State Victim Advocate), David McGuire (Majority Leader of the Senate).

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

I. Welcome

- a. Meeting commenced at approximately 2:06 pm.

II. Review and approve minutes from January meeting

- a. Motion made to approve by Preston Tisdale, seconded by Gail Hardy and Claud Chong, approved via unanimous vote.

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

- a. *Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) – IMRP*
 - a. OJJDP will be in CT Wednesday and Thursday and will attend Thursday's JJPOC meeting at the LOB.
- b. [CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Project \(CTRP3\) – IMRP](#)
 - a. Aileen read the update below, provided by Ken Barone of CTRP3.
 - b. The advisory board unanimously supported S.B. 953, An Act Concerning the Definition of Racial Profiling. Please see our testimony attached. We would welcome the endorsement of the commission.
 - i. Werner made a motion to approve, seconded by David McGuire, Hakima Bey-Coon abstained since she could not review it with State Victim Advocate, approved by majority.
 - c. The state police audit is almost complete. We anticipate having the report ready for public release in May. The draft will be shared with CSP prior to any public release.
 - d. Although the advisory board has not taken a position on this bill, S.B. 1195 would modify some of our traffic laws to make a small number of

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low-level equipment and administrative offense secondary. Meaning that police wouldn't be able to stop the car for the offense but would address the offense if stopped for some other offense.

- e. The 2022 traffic stop analysis is scheduled to be completed by July. We are in the process of analyzing the data now.
- c. [CT Sentencing Commission](#) (CSC) – IMRP
 - a. Alex just met with the Rules Committee regarding its proposal on cash bonds. The Committee took action to forward the proposal for hearing on May 8th and then to all Superior Court judges for their vote.
 - b. [CSC sent 4 legislative proposals to the General Assembly](#):
 - i. The biggest proposal is to expand the age of eligibility for juvenile parole hearings. This proposal would extend the age from 18 to 21.
 - ii. Permit more judicial discretion with mandatory minimums sentencing in certain motor vehicle offenses
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. 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.
 - c. The Commission also submitted testimony on voting rights for incarcerated people.
- a. [Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force](#) (PTATF) – IMRP
 - i. 911/211 Study – IMRP at UConn has finished writing the report. Once it's formatted, it will be released publicly.

IV. Discussion of the CREDCJS conference on policing

- a. The conference planning sub-committee has been meeting
- b. Potential venue: UConn School of Law. The main room in the library holds 175. Will also have breakout rooms.
- c. Potential dates: Wednesday June 14th or Thursday June 15th.
- d. Speakers: Dr. Lorenzo Boyd is confirmed as keynote; still working on speakers for other sessions.
- e. Working title: "Reimagining the Criminal Justice System"
- f. Share suggestions for topics and speakers with Deb by emailing her UConn address.
- g. Created a list of groups to invite; we want to make sure we have content of interest to these diverse, relevant groups. Partial list is below.
 - i. Members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus
 - ii. Community Organizations
 - iii. Law enforcement

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1. Chiefs Association
 2. Largest police union
 3. NOBLE
 - iv. Office of the State's Attorney
 - v. Public Defenders
 - vi. Advocacy Groups – NAACP, ACLU
 - vii. Judicial Branch
 - viii. CHRO
 - ix. CTRP3 Advisory Group
 - x. Members of the CWCSEO
- h. Next step: IMRP finalize invite list and send a Save the Date
- i. Proposed event would meet Commission's charge to: "Sponsor conferences, forums and educational and training programs on the causes, effects and implications of racial and ethnic disparity in the state's criminal justice system."

V. Other business

- a. Gail Hardy – Prosecutor's office hosted 1st Black History Luncheon
- i. Hosted 1st Black History Luncheon in the prosecutor's office, titled "Reflections of our past, Hopes for our Future". Invited all Black prosecutors (29) in the history of the division, along with members of Black Law Students Association in surrounding universities and colleges. Moderated by Justice Lubbie Harper Jr. Great attendance – 26 of 29 invitees. Discussed the need for Black prosecutors, the barriers to enter the profession, reform including breaking the stigma associated with being a Black prosecutor. This event resulted in several students applying for internships and fellowship with the prosecutor's office. Chief State's Attorney Griffin said he would like to have another similar event; it served as a great recruitment tool.
- b. Troy Brown appointed Director of the new Judicial Branch office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- i. Friday, March 10th, Troy Brown was appointed the 1st Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director for the Judicial Branch. The creation of this new department represents the Judicial Branch's commitment to improve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within the department and beyond.

VI. Meeting adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:35pm

2023 Meeting Schedule

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

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January 9, 2023

March 13, 2023

May 8, 2023

July 10, 2023

September 11, 2023

November 13, 2023