

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

Meeting Minutes

May 8, 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), Denise Drummond (CWCSEO), Cheryl Sharp (CHRO), Werner Oyanadel (CWCSEO), Jennifer Medina Zaccagnini (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 2:05pm

II. Review and approve minutes from March meeting

- a. Motion made to approve by Werner Oyanadel, seconded by Hakima Bey-Coon, minutes approved via unanimous vote.

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

- a. *Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) – IMRP*
 - a. JJPOC heard from CSDE on their annual school discipline report.
 - b. This month, JJPOC will hear from the Juvenile Justice Education Unit at DCF overseeing education and transfer of credits for young people at MYI.
 - c. HB 6888 (the JJPOC bill) is still moving through the legislature.
- b. [CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Project](#) (CTRP3) – Ken Barone
 - a. Mr. Barone provided a brief presentation on the reduction in traffic stops and infractions, and record-breaking motor vehicle accident deaths, and the sharp increase in pedestrian deaths.
 - b. A bill to redefine racial profiling in statute received some bipartisan support. It is now on the Senate calendar.
 - c. There is also a bill to make a small number of traffic violations secondary – meaning drivers would not be able to be stopped for those violations but could be cited for them if stopped for a separate, primary offense. This bill passed out of committee with small bipartisan support. It is also on the Senate calendar. This stems from using CT's traffic stop data to identify the reasons for stops that led to disparity and did not impact safety. This

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bill could address some of what is driving disparity in traffic enforcement and allow for the ability for officers to spend time addressing driving behaviors contributing to fatal crashes.

- d. A draft report of the audit of state trooper traffic stop data has been updated and given to state police for review and comment prior to public release.
- c. [CT Sentencing Commission](#) (CSC) – IMRP
 - a. 10% cash bonds – There is a public hearing with the Rules Committee today on the 10% cash bonds proposal.
 - b. Mental health in corrections – Mental health subcommittee released its report, “Mental Health Disorders in Connecticut’s Incarcerated Population,” of findings on the prevalence of mental health and substance use problems amongst incarcerated individuals in CT. Received some local media attention (Hartford Courant: Report: 95.5% of prison inmates have mental illness history <https://www.courant.com/2023/04/30/de-facto-institutions-in-connecticut-95-5-of-prison-inmates-have-mental-illness-history-report-finds/> and CT Insider “[80% of CT prison inmates have mental health or substance abuse issues requiring treatment, report shows](#)”). To continue its investigation into defendants with mental health needs, a delegation of 5 commission members is in Miami looking at its mental health court diversion program.
 - c. [CSC also sent 4 legislative proposals to the General Assembly](#):
 - i. The biggest proposal was 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.
 - v. The Commission also submitted testimony on voting rights for incarcerated people.
- a. [Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force](#) (PTATF) – IMRP
 - i. 911/211 Study to determine what other alternatives exist for people calling 911 is completed and has been sent to the legislature.
 - ii. Meeting with police training council to potentially create a DEI coordinator for the police academy to review training at recruit and recertification levels.

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- iii. A subcommittee of the POST council is working on assessing bias in the hiring process. Collaborating with California to build a model policy for assessing bias in hiring practices.

IV. “Reimagining the Criminal Justice System: Where We Were, What We’ve Done, and What’s Next” conference planning update – Deb Fuller, IMRP

- a. Total capacity is 175 and the subcommittee is encouraging members to pre-register; so far 78 people have pre-registered.
- b. Limited law enforcement representation, so far.
- c. Deb Fuller presented a working draft agenda for the conference including breakout sessions and speakers.
- d. Suggestion and ideas on how to increase pre-registration:
 - i. E-mail invitation to legislators with a message from Steven Hernandez
 - ii. CT Police Association has a robust membership.
 - iii. NOBLE – Conflict with the CT Chief Association’s annual meeting. Hoping that some members of their command staff will attend.
- e. Will send another mass invitation to existing mailing list.

V. Other business

- a. The Black and Puerto Rican Caucus has been hosting peaceful demonstrations at the Capitol about the lack of Latino/Hispanic judges. Out of 20 recommended by the Judicial Selection Commission, only 2 have been selected.

VI. Meeting adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 2:47pm

2023 Meeting Schedule

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