

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2023

2:00 – 3:30

Virtual via WebEx

Commission members present: Justice Lubbie Harper Jr. (Chair), Patrick Ridenhour (Representative of Municipal Police Chiefs), Werner Oyanadel (CWCSEO), Denise Drummond (CWCSEO), Jennifer Medina Zaccagnini (BOPP), Claud Chong (COPD), Monica Rams (Commissioner of Children and Families), Avery Gaddis (Senate Minority Leader Appointee), Alex Tsarkov (CSC/House of Representatives Appointee).

Non-commission members present: Aileen Keays (UConn IMRP), Deb Fuller (UConn IMRP), Irvine Peck's-Agaya (UConn IMRP), Troy Brown (Judicial/CSSD), Brittany LaMarr (UNH The Tow Youth Justice Institute).

I. Welcome

- a. Meeting commenced at approximately 2:04pm

II. Review and approve minutes from May meeting

- a. Chief Ridenhour made a motion to approve, seconded by Werner Oyanadel. Minutes were approved via unanimous voice vote.

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

- a. *Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC)* – Brittany LaMarr, UNH Tow Youth Justice Initiative
 - a. JJPOC meets monthly. Next meeting is July 20th, 2-3:30 at LOB with hybrid option. Meeting will include a presentation from DCF on dual-involved (DCF & DOC) youth, followed by a report by Tow Youth Justice Institute re: new JJPOC orientation manual.
 - b. At the last CREDCJS meeting, JJPOC had legislation pending. Several recommendations passed in [Public Act 23-188](#), An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice. One such recommendation is the creation of a reentry success plan to be presented to JJPOC by the end of this year. The plan would be created jointly by several state agencies with information from directly impacted youth and families. Another section of the bill is the implementation plan to transfer youth from DOC to Judicial CSSD. This plan is due to JJPOC for review by the end of the year and would have Judicial CSSD retain custody of those youth. Pre-arrest diversion plan did not pass. It would have created pre-arrest automatic diversion for youth charged with 1 of 3 offenses. What passed is a study to determine what a pre-arrest diversion for these offenses would look like. In the budget, a

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commissary subgroup had worked on eliminating use of commissary for youth at MYI and York to switch from commissary to a BPS model which is a point system for positive behavior, attending school, etc. to access the store. This was to eliminate the hierarchies and bartering that exists with commissaries and to incentivize positive behavior. The budget did include a line item for BPS model for MYI and York youth under age 18. The subgroup is still meeting to craft what this would look like. The expulsion and suspension work group wanted school discipline collaborative to reconsider language identifying “violent” or behavior of a “sexual nature” for youth in grades K through 2nd grade. Some also wanted to eliminate the ability to suspend or expel youth in those grades for those reasons.

- c. Werner informed REDCJS that there are some federal laws that limit the state’s ability to make modifications. However, there are some options for modifications for offenses of a sexual nature and bringing a weapon to school.
- b. [*CT Racial Profiling Prohibition Project*](#) (CTRP3) – Aileen Keays, IMRP
 - a. The CT State Police audit was released on June 28th. The report can be found on CTRP3’s website under reports: www.ctrp3.org. Findings were presented during the June 28th CTRP3 meeting and recorded on CT-N.
 - b. Ken Barone would be happy to present findings during a future meeting.
- c. [*CT Sentencing Commission*](#) (CSC) – Alex Tsarkov, IMRP
 - a. There was a big development during the annual meeting of the Judges of the Superior Court. Judges voted on the CSC proposal on 10% cash bond which reduced bonds options from 10% to 7%. Dependents with bonds under \$50,000 will be able to pay directly to the courts and get their money back.
 - b. The legislature passed some of the CSC recommendations.
- d. [*Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force*](#) (PTATF) – IMRP
 - a. No update

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

- a. The Commission hosted “Re-Imagining the Criminal Justice System: Where We Were, What We’ve Done, What’s Next?” on Thursday, June 15th, 2023, at the University of Connecticut School of Law. This day-long conference invited criminal justice professionals to deconstruct the justice system, to reflect on strides that have been made, and to develop new ways to embrace diversity and to eliminate racial and ethnic disparity in the criminal justice system. This conference was co-sponsored by the [National Organization of Black Law Enforcement](#) and the [Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, & Opportunity](#). The Commission was honored to welcome Dr. Lorenzo Boyd as its keynote speaker to deliver a powerful presentation on the historical relationship

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between law enforcement and communities of color, while also touching on the topic of procedural and restorative justice.

- b. To view the conference program and agenda, please click [here](#).
 - c. The CT-N recording of the conference is available [here](#) – CT-N: Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System June 15th Conference.
 - d. About 130-150 attendees. People seemed happy to meet in-person. Excellent attendance from the Judicial Branch including CSSD and juvenile probation, bail, and Family Relations. Also had great representation from the public defender’s office, BOPP, some from ACLU, and several attorneys. A few community members also attended and faculty from UNH, and Quinnipiac and UConn Law Schools. Low attendance from law enforcement, but we learned there was a scheduling conflict with a significant law enforcement event also occurring in CT.
 - e. Seven groups participated in facilitated dialogues. Deb reviewed suggestions and other notes from those discussions to consider for action steps for the commission. Commission members can review and consider the recommendations prior to the September meeting and during that meeting, we can discuss what the Commission may want to do.
 - f. The conference was excellent; however, one observation was that following the keynote address, attendees seemed to avoid explicitly using the terms “race” and/or “ethnicity”. This is the conference of the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the CJ System and to address these issues, we need to name them, even if it’s uncomfortable.
 - g. Will post everything on the REDCJS website.
- V. Other business**
- a. None
- VI. Meeting adjournment**
- a. Motion to adjourn made by Werner and seconded by Chief Ridenhour. Adjourned at 3:04pm

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