

Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission

Victim Issues Subcommittee

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

10 a.m. – 12 noon

VIA: Teams

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Marc Pelka, Chair, Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission, presided over the meeting.

Liza Andrews, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV); Linda Cimino, Office of Victim Services (OVS); Melissa Conway, Office of Policy & Management (OPM); Maura Crossin, Program Director CT Alliance & Victims Right Center of CT (The Alliance); Lucy Nolan, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence (The Alliance); Jessica Pizzano, Survivors of Homicide (SOH); Leland Moore for Richard Sparaco, Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP) ; Nina Vazquez, CT Alliance & Victims Right Center of CT (The Alliance).

1. Welcome

Mark Pelka welcomed members present. The minutes from the January meeting were accepted with noted changes to correct the spelling of two names.

2. National Crime Victims' Rights Week

The theme for the annual observance was shared with the committee: Support Victims – Build Trust – Engage Communities observed 4/18-4/24. The Office of the Victim Advocate is considering virtual options for an event or series of events in observance of the week and invites other committee members to share any planned events and consider participating in a group event as in past years. Members present shared interest and ideas on holding a series of events for the week and stressed the importance of ensuring a platform for victims/survivors to share their stories. Vanessa from the OVA, will send an invite for those interested in participating in the planning for a joint event.

3. Legislative Updates

Lucy Nolan from the Alliance shared that some bills are coming forward but specifics are not available. As it relates to the clean slate bill, Lucy asked for support from members. Jessica from Survivors of Homicide also said support is welcomed as it relates to auto theft cases, clean slate bill and youthful offender status proposals. It is important that law makers recognize that all juveniles cannot be grouped together. Marc shared that he and Natasha are working on juvenile offender status and remedy. Maura from The Alliance and VRCCT added that statutory changes are expected. Linda Cimino from Office of Victim Services, shared that Language to correct the exclusion of crime

victims in juvenile to adult hearings is part of court operations bill – the courts recognize it is a problem.

Members can contact the OVA or Maura to get assistance with filing motions as it relates to juvenile hearings. Vanessa shared with the group that Natasha wants members to contact her for any assistance needed with legislation.

Marc applauded Maura and Natasha on the successes with the motions. Marc recently spoke with Pennsylvania and Michigan representatives regarding similar bills – the public hearing may take place sometime next month and Marc encouraged everyone to be very clear and specific with the impact that is needed. Marc shared language provided in the state of Michigan <http://sado.org/Articles/Article/839>.

Clean slate legislation can be helpful for former offenders when looking for employment, however, it is important to acknowledge that retaining information of criminal history is important for the criminal justice system, housing, and access to firearms. Leland from Board of Pardons and Parole, shared the contrast between pardons and erasure.

- A pardon is granted by way of application and a hearing, if approved a pardon removes a person's criminal history entirely from record, registries, allowing access to firearms and eliminating direct & lateral consequences from a conviction.
- Auto erasure – essentially the same as a pardon, but granted automatically if a conviction meets criteria in place, erasure will not be monitored or granted on a case by case manner.

The process of one over the other varies largely. Leland offered to set up a call to discuss this further if anyone needed clarification and wanted to understand the process of what clean slate means versus a pardons and how victims play a significant role in the process.

Jessica mentioned a bill that was proposed that caused some confusion as it seems to reiterate a right that is in place for victims of crime. The bill was proposed in concept form with no supporting details. Vanessa from the OVA, mentioned it was the result of a case where a plea deal was offered and the victim was not notified.

4. Victimization Survey Update

Linda Cimino from OVS, shared that one piece of the RFP has caused confusion with applicants, the bidding period will close Tuesday, February 24, 2021. Five agencies have expressed interest, including an international group and local organizations. By the next meeting in March more details will be in place.

5. Other business

Members discussed that new processes incorporated due to Covid-19 have proven helpful and show virtual options for participation are effective, and old ways do not necessarily need to be revisited once the pandemic passes.

Lucy from The Alliance shared she is working on a way to ensure notification of legislative hearings to engage the community to testify on these important and sensitive topics.

Adjourned 12:03pm

Next meeting: March 17, 2021