

## **Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission**

### **Victim Issues Subcommittee**

**Wednesday, May 19, 2021**

**10 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.**

**VIA: Teams**

### **Minutes**

#### **Committee Members Present:**

Marc Pelka, Chair, Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission presided over the meeting in the absence of Natasha M. Pierre, Chair, State Victim Advocate.

Liza Andrews, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV); Linda Cimino, Office of Victim Services (OVS); Maura Crossin, Program Director CT Alliance & Victims Right Center of CT (The Alliance); Bob Garguilo, Executive Director, MADD; Lucy Nolan, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence (The Alliance); Jessica Pizzano, Survivors of Homicide (SOH); Richard Sparaco, Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP); Ebonie Suggs, Department of Correction (DOC); Maurice Reaves, Office of Policy & Management (OPM); Nina Vazquez, CT Alliance & Victims Right Center of CT (The Alliance).

#### **1. Welcome**

Marc Pelka from OPM called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and welcomed all members present. Marc also introduced Maurice Reaves in his new role with the Office of Policy & Management.

#### **2. Review and approve March 17, 2021 minutes.**

Due to National Crime Victims Rights Week, the April meeting was postponed. The minutes for the March meeting were moved for approval by Liza Andrews from CCADV and second by Linda Cimino from OVS.

#### **3. National Crime Victims' Rights Week Overview**

Vanessa Torres from the Office of The Victim Advocate provided an overview of the week's events. The training and participation from stakeholders were well received. Attendees provided positive feedback and for the first virtual training conference offered the staff of the OVA felt it went smoothly. Vanessa thanked all of those who participated and helped make the event a success.

#### **4. Agency Updates/Legislative updates**

Agency representatives were asked to provide a brief update of agency and legislative dealings.

Lucy Nolan from The Alliance shared that the DV bill was voted on, the grooming bill was passed, and the sexual amnesty bill is pending. The Human Trafficking Act was passed to help vacate eligible records. The Trafficking in Persons Council will be conducting a study on grooming. The Alliance will continue to review criminal justice bills for any further action.

Pelka provided an update on the administration's contributions to discussions regarding the clean slate bill, such as narrowing the list of charges to focus on misdemeanors and retaining criminal justice agency access to the record. Other participants shared input provided by their association on clean slate and other policy proposals.

Maura Crossin from The Alliance shared thoughts and praised efforts to incorporate victim input. She asked about the status of the juvenile transfer bill, and Cimino shared it was included in the Judicial Court Operations Bill, which is being considered by the legislature.

Ebonie Suggs from the DOC Victim Services Unit shared that her focus has been on the Reynolds Decision and notifying victims affected of what it means. Victims are seeking information in response to the decision to help them prepare for impacts from the decision. Ebonie thanked Richard Sparaco and BOPP for their help with calls coming in regarding the changes. Northern Correctional is set to close soon and two others are expected to follow.

## **5. Victim Needs Assessment**

Cimino shared that the meeting held for the Victims Needs Assessment went great and the groups research and vision was impressive, and a timeline is now in place. Thanks to the group's work, a wealth of data that will be gathered and can be used for various needs including services, funding, and outreach. Next steps will include completing drafts of the survey to capture victim needs.

The information generated by the survey will generate data to help prepare for potential cuts and impacts resulting from the federal Victims of Crime Act Fund. Cuts would cause negative impacts on victim service organizations and victims relying on this federal funding.

## **6. Other/New Business**

Cimino suggested that the next meeting include update and discussion about the continued increase in criminal justice system workflow and operations. Pelka agreed this is an important topic and shared his suggestion that the subcommittee discuss the impact of criminal cases that have accumulated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members were asked to prepare input and questions to bring to the next subcommittee meeting.

Next meeting: June 16, 2021

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 am.