

*DRAFT*  
**Connecticut Sentencing Task Force**  
**Full Committee Meeting**  
**November 13, 2007**  
**1:00 pm**

**Meeting Commenced:** 1:15 pm

**I. Introduction:** Chairman Farr

**II. Member Introductions**

**III. Vera/Pew: Art of Sentencing Conference Overview**

**(Attendees: Barb Tombs, Tom Ullmann, David Shepack, Bob Farr, Sen. John Kissel, Tom Hogan, Rep. Bill Dyson, Andrew Clark)**

- Pew Foundation and the Vera Institute of Justice sponsored the two day conference in Denver that included four states – CT, NJ, IL, AL
- Participants discussed the need for continuous and comprehensive sentencing policy review
- To date, policies have been mainly reactive
- CT has a lack of consistent data, which makes it difficult to reform sentencing policies based on research and data analysis
- Technical obstacle, even if certain data sets existed how would they be connected?
- It was suggested that CT criminal justice agencies do an agency inventory to see what data each agency is collecting
- Discussed the need to create a data repository
- Creation of a permanent sentencing commission and decide what its responsibilities should be
- Many of the states that attended spoke about how difficult it was initially to convince the legislature in their states that a Sentencing Commission is necessary; however, after having been established for a period of time, the Commissions became highly regarded and relied upon by the legislature and criminal justice community as a whole

**IV. Subcommittee Reports**

**Sentencing Structure:**

- Created a smaller workgroup to gather input regarding a sentencing philosophy
- By next full meeting this group should be able to propose and philosophy
- Barb Tombs has been facilitating this workgroup
- Discussed the reasons why a permanent Sentencing Commission is essential.
- Decided it should an apolitical neutral body committed to research and recommendations

- Senator Kissel spoke with Gov. Rell regarding the creation of a permanent Sentencing Commission
- A Sentencing Commission will address immediate issues as opposed to the legislature, this would also prevent reactive responses
- Find a better way to collect crime data in Connecticut, OPM is attempting to find a way to centralize data resources, also trying to find a way to motivate our municipalities to participate in crime data collection
- Task Force agreed it will request an extension that will allow an opportunity to be in session during the next general assembly

#### **Offense Classification:**

- Separating motor vehicle statutes into felony offenses and infractions
- Creating a new violation called a “motor vehicle offense” could possibly receive a sentence of 30 days
- Legislative staff created proposals
- Trying to classify unclassified crimes beginning with misdemeanors
- Spent a significant amount of time examining both burglary and three strikes statutes
- Kevin Kane submitted proposals addressing burglary which included suggested changes to the persistent offender statute and the creation of a home invasion

#### **Community Supervision & Alternative Sanctions:**

CSSD distributed proposals for language changes (can be found on the OPM website)

- **Mental Health Conditional Diversionary Program**
  1. Should address the issue of public safety especially for those who deal with these individuals on the streets (i.e. police officers)
  2. Instead of an erasure for those who successfully complete this diversionary program, the police departments should have some knowledge of a previous arrest.
  3. Should we implement a program similar to Accelerated Rehabilitation?
  4. Should be similar to an unconditional discharge so that the police have record of previous offenses
  5. Try to keep some identifier so that law enforcement is aware of a criminal history
  6. Are we providing this population with unlimited chances?
  7. This is an issue that a Sentencing Commission would address
- **Length of Probation**
  1. Added new section: allow up to a five year probation term for those offenders convicted of a class A felony
  2. No changes in terms of the maximum term of probation for sex offenders and class b felons

3. In a case by case basis, the court still has the discretion to go beyond the three or two year term
4. Progress Report- for a probation term greater than two years a progress report will be completed to contain a recommendation to the court to either stop or continue probation until the end of the original sentence.
5. The progress report will have to be provided 60 days prior to end of the two year term.
6. Modifications to the first bullet will be made (proposal can be found on the OPM website)

- **Mandatory PSI's**

1. Offenders will receive a PSI if the expected sentence is two years or more
2. Approximately 600 additional PSI's per year
3. Looking to implement a new risk assessment compatible with other agencies

**Disparity:**

- Can spend the whole time on racial and ethnic issues
- Interested group with the best of intentions lack the ability accurately address certain issues
- The subcommittee also feels they are unable to perform the necessary analysis included in the charge.
- Additional expertise needed to provide a thorough analysis
- Looking to collaborate with the Connecticut Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity, this group is looking to focus on young people and law enforcement
- Senator Kissel will contact Barbara Tombs for information on what other states' Sentencing Commissions do

**V. Interim Report & Recommendations**

Due to the length of the meeting, this item was not discussed.

**VI. Next Meetings:**

Full Meeting- January 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm

Offense Classification- December 4<sup>th</sup> 9:00 am

Community Supervision & Alternative Sanctions- December 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm

**Meeting Adjourned: 4:31 pm**