

Connecticut Sentencing Task Force
Full Task Force Meeting Summary
Monday, September 24th 2007
1:00 pm

I. **Welcome-** Chairman Farr

Meeting commenced: 1:20 pm

II. **Member Introductions**

III. **Recap: Charge of Task Force-** Andrew Clark, CCSU

1. **Enabling Statute-** Passed last year, which set up the Task Force, it determined the members. There were seven requirements which to report on.
2. **First Meetings and Retreat-** Meeting held at CCSU, members were asked what they would like to work on. Vera Institute presented at well and suggested that the CT Sentencing task force create a philosophy and subcommittees.

IV. **Community Supervision & Alternative Sanctions -**Probation
Recommendations (CSSD)

1. **Proposal #1: To expand the use of Pre-Sentence Investigations for persons convicted of a felony.**

- A PSI provides information about prior arrests, whether the client received a sentence or other forms of supervision
 - Provides victim Information
 - Describes support networks (family, jobs, education etc.)
 - The current CT statute states that a PSI is mandatory for all first time felony offenders
 - Youthful offender sentencing- under 21 not convicted of a felony, information cannot be shared.
 - Mental health and substance abuse evaluations may be attached.
 - PSI is distributed 72 hours before sentencing
 - Each year, CSSD completes 2,500 PSI's a year.
- **Proposal A-** All first time felons receive a PSI without exception
 - **Proposal B-** All first time felons with an expected sentence will included a period of incarceration will have a PSI
 - **Proposal C-** All first time felons who receive a sentence of two year or more will have a PSI

Preliminary Full Committee Vote-

- Report to legislature that there is some merit within this recommendation
- Figure out how to compromise with the all agencies involved

- **Proposal #2: To reduce the maximum terms of probation and to enable early termination based on a positive behavior charge**

1. National and CT statistics show that offenders are most likely to recidivate within in 2 months after being placed on supervision.
2. According to CSSD statistics, 87% of new arrests occurred during the first 24 months after probation placement.
3. Most supervision programs designed to change criminal behavior can be delivered within 24 months.
4. In Connecticut early termination is allowed, but rarely used
5. CSSD not just trying to monitor probation but rather to change behavior, important to focus efforts during the time period when the risk of re-offending is the highest.
6. Sex offenses are excluded
7. A step in the right direction for public safety
8. Redirecting efforts and personnel to areas of greatest need

Preliminary Full Committee Vote-

- Take care of language issues raised by the committee
 1. Disparity Subcommittee will review proposal
- **Proposal #3: Create a diversionary program that combines behavioral health treatment with community supervision**
 1. Any client found to have a psychiatric disability, or would benefit from treatment with non-serious pending charges are eligible.
 2. The judge, Prosecutor, Defense Attorney or CSSD employee can request mental health evaluation.
 3. The client must sign an authorization release form and waive their right to a speedy trial so that they can participate in the mental health program.
 4. The client must agree to comply with the conditions of the program which will not exceed two years.
 5. Public record of an offense committed by a client considered psychiatrically disabled will be subject to a full dismissal followed by expungment if the client is compliant with the mental health programming.

V. Subcommittee Summaries

1. Disparity Subcommittee Public Hearing Summary- Senator Kissel & Senator Coleman

- Hartford Public High school students, interested, bright and concerned
- Asked about disparity in the CJ system
- Thought female police officers tend to be more gentle and understanding
- One student favored the “three strikes” law
- Students said the STF should speak with the inmates
- Students spoke about reentry and that those offenders entering society should have all the resources they need.

2. Offense Classification

- a. Will continue to review offenses and make suggestions regarding classification.

3. Sentencing Structure-

- a. Persistent offender, tryer of fact will make the determination of persistent offender.
- b. OPM burglary statistics

Next Meeting- November 13th at 1:00 pm

Meeting adjourned- 4:46pm