

Connecticut Sentencing Task Force
Sentencing Structure Subcommittee
Meeting Summary
October 23, 2007
2:30 pm

Attendees: Andrew Clark (ISCJ/CCSU), Richard Sparaco (BOPP), Robert Farr (BOPP), Bill Dyson (State Rep), Steve Cox (CCSU), Brian Austin (OPM), Ken Green (State Rep), Fred Levesque (DOC), Larry D’Orsi (Judicial), Deb Fuller (Judicial), David Shepack (State’s Atty. Litchfield), Kevin Kane (CSA), Merit Lajoie (OVA)

Welcome- Chairman Farr

Member Introductions

Last Meeting Summary- Andrew Clark (ISCJ/CCSU)

- Can be found on OPM Website

Presentation: CT Felony Murder Study- Dr. Stephen Cox, CCSU

Review of 2004 Murder Arrests that are Pending or Resulted in Convictions

- Pulled felony murder charges in 2004 and looked for predicate burglary offenses
- There were 141 murder charges in 2004 for 100 people
- Of the 141 charges, guilty verdicts were reached on 47 (33%) and 13 (9%) were pending
 - What does the 141 number mean? We cannot assume there have 141 victims
 - UCR vs. NIBRS, what is more reliable?
 - Need to come up with a unified system otherwise we will continue to struggle with this information
 - This committee should offer information on how the researchers can provide meaningful answers.
 - Meet with representatives from various criminal justice agencies to discuss the information needs.
- The 60 charges that resulted in a conviction or were pending consisted of 49 people. Most of the offenders were males, over 30 years old, and had an age at first arrest of 16 or 17 years old
- Of the 49 individuals, close to one-third (32%) had been arrested on at least 6 separate occasions prior to committing murder, most had no record of violence (59%), and most had not been sentenced to prison (59%)
- Of the felony murders, most (10 out of 13) were committed during a robbery.
- Of the 49 murder offenders, 13 (26%) could have been defined as “persistent offenders” prior to committing murder and 6 (12%) would have fallen under California’s three strikes laws.
 - Burglary wouldn’t be considered a “three strikes” offense in California

Recidivism Rates for Burglary Inmates Released in 2004

- In 2000, 517 incarcerated burglars were released from DOC facilities. The majority of these inmates were incarcerated for burglary 3 (425, 82%)
- Across all three types of burglary, end of sentence releases had the highest reconviction rate.
- There was no consistent re-offending pattern for any of the burglary offenses. For burglary 3 offenders, 40 (9%) were reconvicted for burglary, 33 (8%) for a larceny, and 24 (6%) for a drug-related offense.
 - Of those convicted of burglary, which ones percentage wise come from the larger cities? (CCSU will find out)

Judiciary Proposals

- **Violent offender definitions**
 - CT does not have a definition in our statutes as to what a violent crime is.
 - What is the purpose of having one definition of violent?
 - Should inform the legislature that there are three definitions of violence depending on the agency
- **Consecutive vs. Concurrent Sentences**
 - Can be counter productive, consecutive sentencing has caused prosecutors to dismiss underlying charges to prevent long sentences.
- **Permanent Sentencing Commission**
 - Highlight the impact of such a commission
 - Commissions in other states serve various purposes, what would we want in Connecticut?
 - In many states they take a vote and make recommendations based on that vote
 - We should propose that the Sentencing Take Force be a permanent committee at the upcoming hearing on November 27th.

Discussion

- One of the main concerns is the data deficiencies across agencies. Improvement in this area could help the agencies then provide better information for research purposes.

Next meeting- November 13th at 1:00 pm (full meeting)