



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SENTENCING COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 17, 2016

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, November 3, 2016, 10 a.m.
Legislative Office Building Room 1C
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

On Thursday, November 3, 2016, the Connecticut Sentencing Commission will hold a public hearing on pretrial release and detention and pretrial diversion programs. The hearing will take place in Room 1C of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, at 10 AM.

The Connecticut Sentencing Commission was established under Connecticut Public Act 10-129, *An Act Establishing a Sentencing Commission*, to review on an ongoing basis the criminal justice and sentencing policies and laws of this state. Part of the Commission's charge is to "make recommendations concerning criminal justice legislation, including proposed modifications thereto, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary which shall hold a hearing thereon." To that end, the Connecticut Sentencing Commission is in the process of evaluating Connecticut's pretrial release and detention practices and pretrial diversion programs at the request of Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

I. Pretrial Release and Detention

The Commission is seeking testimony on the ability of Connecticut's current pretrial justice system to justly and fairly maximize public safety, appearance in court, and the release of bailable defendants. In Connecticut, police officers, bail commissioners, and judges impose financial conditions of release—secured money bonds—on individuals held in custody prior to trial. Once imposed, a defendant is required to deposit an amount of money with a professional bail bondsman or the court in order to be released from jail.

The Commission is interested in whether the current system allows for appropriate responses to defendants based risk, whether the current method for assessing risk is adequate, and whether the decision to release or detain a defendant before trial is truly based on an actuarial assessment of risk of failure to appear to court and public safety.

II. Pretrial Diversion

Pretrial diversion programs provide defendants with an alternative disposition to the criminal court process. These programs seek to address the underlying cause of criminal behavior by providing an opportunity for the dismissal of charges and removal of the arrest from the person's record upon successful program completion. Pretrial diversion programs are available for specified offenses; have different eligibility requirements; and may include fees, victim approval, or restitution payments. They are largely intended for defendants who would be better served through treatment rather than traditional sanctions.

The Connecticut Sentencing Commission seeks testimony on how these programs operate; their frequency of use and effectiveness; participant characteristics; and agencies', prosecutors', defense attorneys', and the public's recommendations. Comment on the sufficiency of program options or overlapping program criteria is also welcome.

Sign-up for the public hearing will begin promptly at 8:30AM and will conclude at 9:30AM in the 1st floor Atrium of the Legislative Office Building. Speaker order will be determined by lottery. Anyone wishing to testify after the drawing is closed must sign up on the official list in Room 1C, at which point sign-up will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Written testimony will be accepted for distribution to Commission members for the public hearing during the sign up period. If you would like each Commissioner to have a copy for the hearing, please submit 30 copies. If you would simply like to have your testimony submitted for the public record please submit one copy. Please note that any testimony submitted for the public record will be placed on the Commission's website and may be subject to Connecticut's Freedom of Information statutes and regulations. At any point prior to the hearing, electronic testimony for the public record can be submitted to the Commission via email: SentencingCommission@ccsu.edu. Speakers will be limited to three minutes of testimony. Testimony should be limited to matters related to the proposals on the agenda.

If you have any questions, please contact the Commission at (860) 832-1852 or via e-mail at the address listed above.