

National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) 2024 Annual Conference

Patricia O'Rourke, PhD, Research Associate

Matthew Hono, Commission Intern

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NASC Mission

The National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) is a non-profit organization that was created to:

- facilitate the exchange and sharing of information, ideas, data, expertise, and experiences, and
- to educate on issues related to sentencing policies, guidelines and commissions.



NASC Membership

Currently, NASC membership includes representation from roughly two dozen states with formally established sentencing commissions or policy councils, as well as states considering the creation of a sentencing commission.



NASC Conference

The NASC conference brings together judges, legislators, correctional officials, policy makers, academics, researchers, and practitioners from around the country to:

- examine our nation's experiences with sentencing laws and practices, and
 - to discuss emerging issues and innovations.
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**NASC 2024 Thirty Year
Anniversary Conference
Sentencing Then and
Now:
The Role of Commissions
in Sentencing Reform,
1993/1994 to 2023/2024**

- The first informal gathering of state Sentencing Commissions took place at the University of Colorado in 1993.
- Criminal justice systems across the country were experiencing high rates of incarceration and soaring costs.
- Sentencing policies varied across states, but Commissions were dealing with some common issues related to policies such as mandatory minimums, three-strikes laws, and “truth in sentencing.”

**NASC 2024 Thirty Year
Anniversary Conference
Sentencing Then and
Now:
The Role of Commissions
in Sentencing Reform,
1993/1994 to 2023/2024**

- What was the role of Commissions as part of the adoption, or promotion, or resistance to these policy changes?
- What is their role today?
- How are Commissions and processes today different than 30 years ago?

Attending Jurisdictions Highlights

Alaska

- Publishing a report on domestic violence, examining disparities in cases per capita across geographic locations, race/ethnicity, conviction rates, and disposition time
- Researching pretrial delay and relationship between bail status and case outcomes

Minnesota

- Conducting a comprehensive review of Minnesota's sentencing guidelines and practices, funded by Arnold Ventures

Illinois

- Collecting standardized data on Accountability and Felony Murder to inform policy recommendations

Attending Jurisdictions Highlights

Nevada

- Completed an in-depth analysis of the DOC aging population and DOC medical costs
- Created a Misdemeanor Subcommittee to begin a comprehensive study of the state's misdemeanor system

New Mexico

- Evaluating performance of its local grantees of the Crime Reduction Grant Act
- Overhauling statutes governing the Commission's roles and responsibilities

North Carolina

- Conducted a multivariate analysis of legal and extralegal factors that impact judicial sentencing decisions
- Transitioning to a new sentencing data management system, expanding existing datasets with more felony and misdemeanor cases

Attending Jurisdictions Highlights

Pennsylvania

- Issuing a report this fall on veterans, PTSD, and TBI
- Conducted an evaluation of PA's Short Sentence Parole program

Virginia

- Established an automated juvenile case data workflow for the first time, enabling the Commission to assess the impact of transferring juveniles to adult court and other legislative changes

Washington State

- Provided testimony on 38 bills, including a racial and ethnic impact statement that defeated a bill
- Engaged in a multi-year review of the state's Sentencing Reform Act

Themes Across Jurisdictions/Ideas and Implications for Connecticut

Evaluating and Changing Membership

District of Columbia

- Added three new voting members and one non-voting member.
- Modified requirements for existing seats, including specifying that one of the existing seats designated for a resident must be reserved for a returning citizen.

Minnesota

- Added seats designated for an academic and a treatment/rehabilitative-services practitioner.
- Instituted a requirement that one of the three seats already reserved for public members be for an individual who has served a felony sentence.

Nevada

- Added three members (an additional district attorney, a representative from the Central Repository of Nevada Records of Criminal History, and a criminal-justice focused academic)

Evaluating and Changing Membership

Ideas/Implications for Connecticut

- Review existing membership size and specified roles in comparison to other jurisdictions and trends across jurisdictions.
- Consider potential changes, taking into consideration the statutory mandates of the Commission and the unique landscape of the Connecticut context.

Expanding Community Outreach, Education, and Engagement

Virginia

- State sentencing guidelines are the focus of the Commission's education initiatives.
- Their motto is, "Being available is our biggest outreach." Fielding questions and delivering trainings.

District of Columbia

- Extensive use of social media and online videos.
- Presentations and trainings for community groups, including young people.
- Email marketing and surveys/polls.
- Staff member dedicated to the role of education and community engagement.

Pennsylvania

- Education and outreach is a priority, with a unit of six staff members.
- Extensive educational offerings, online and in-person, related to the state's sentencing guidelines.
- Commission staff teach courses at universities.
- New chair was a political and community organizer, focused on developing community outreach and engagement.

Expanding Community Outreach, Education, and Engagement

Ideas/Implications for Connecticut

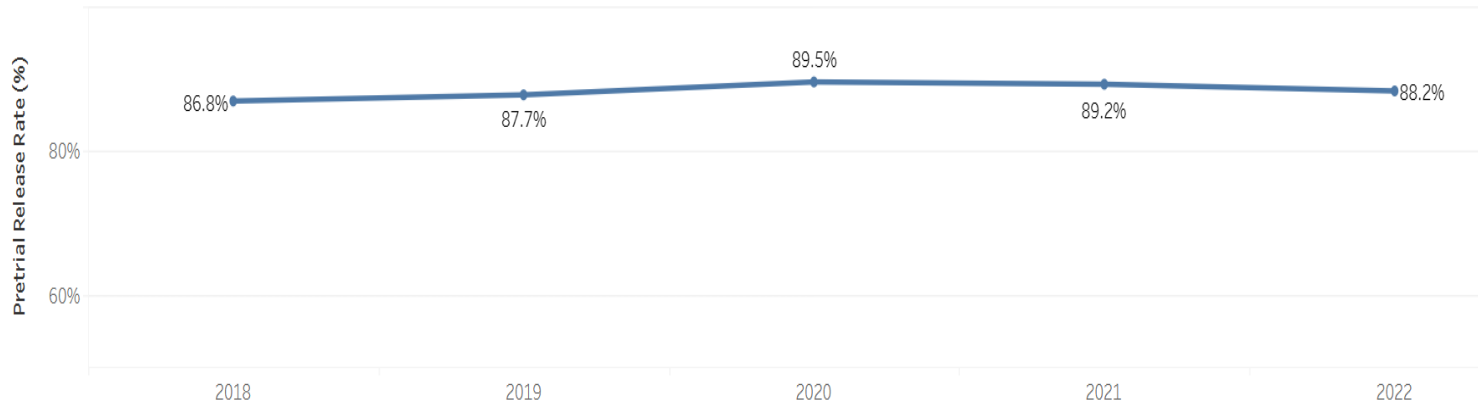
- Review the Commission's statutory mandate to provide training regarding sentencing and related issues, policies and practices.
- Evaluate current activities related to this training mandate.
- Consider the role of community outreach, education, and engagement in the work of the Commission, taking into consideration the unique landscape of the Connecticut context.

Leveraging Data to Inform and Reform the Criminal Legal System

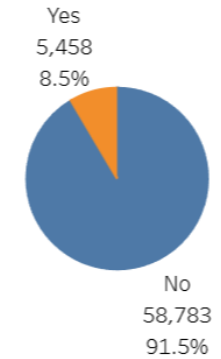
- **Virginia**
 - Virginia Sentencing Commission has overseen the “Pretrial Data Project”
 - Merged and processed data across agencies
 - Created an [interactive dashboard](#) to visualize pretrial data
- **Kansas**
 - Created an application that automates sentencing data entry and allows for the streamlined sharing of interagency data
 - Transformed its annual sentencing reports into [digital dashboards](#)
 - Used the data to detect geographic and racial disparities in sentencing
- **Hawaii**
 - Tasked by statute to create a "Pretrial Database and Reporting System"
 - Provided with funds to study the feasibility of a centralized, "technology-based solution"
 - [Created a pretrial data map](#) that showcases the differing databases and court documents that house data across the pretrial process

Pretrial Dashboard (Virginia)

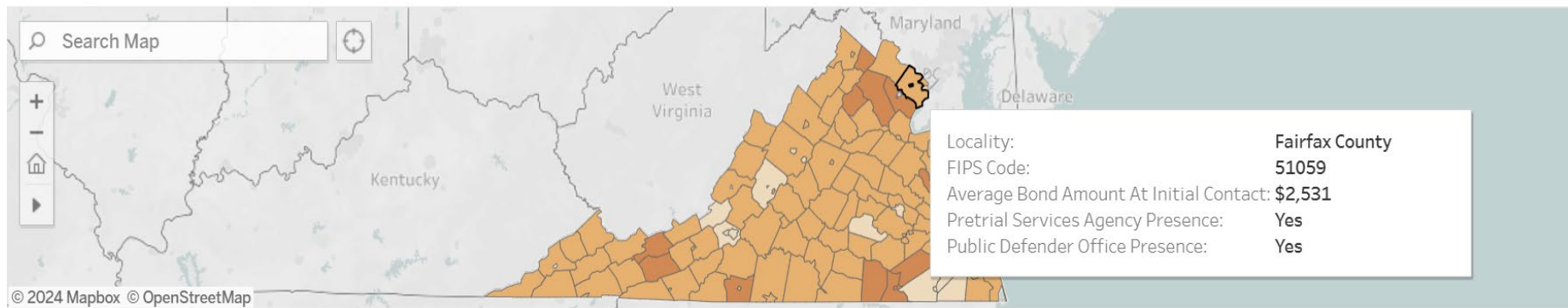
Pretrial Release Rate



New Arrests for Felony Offense



Average Bond Amount at Initial Contact



Average Bond Amount (\$)



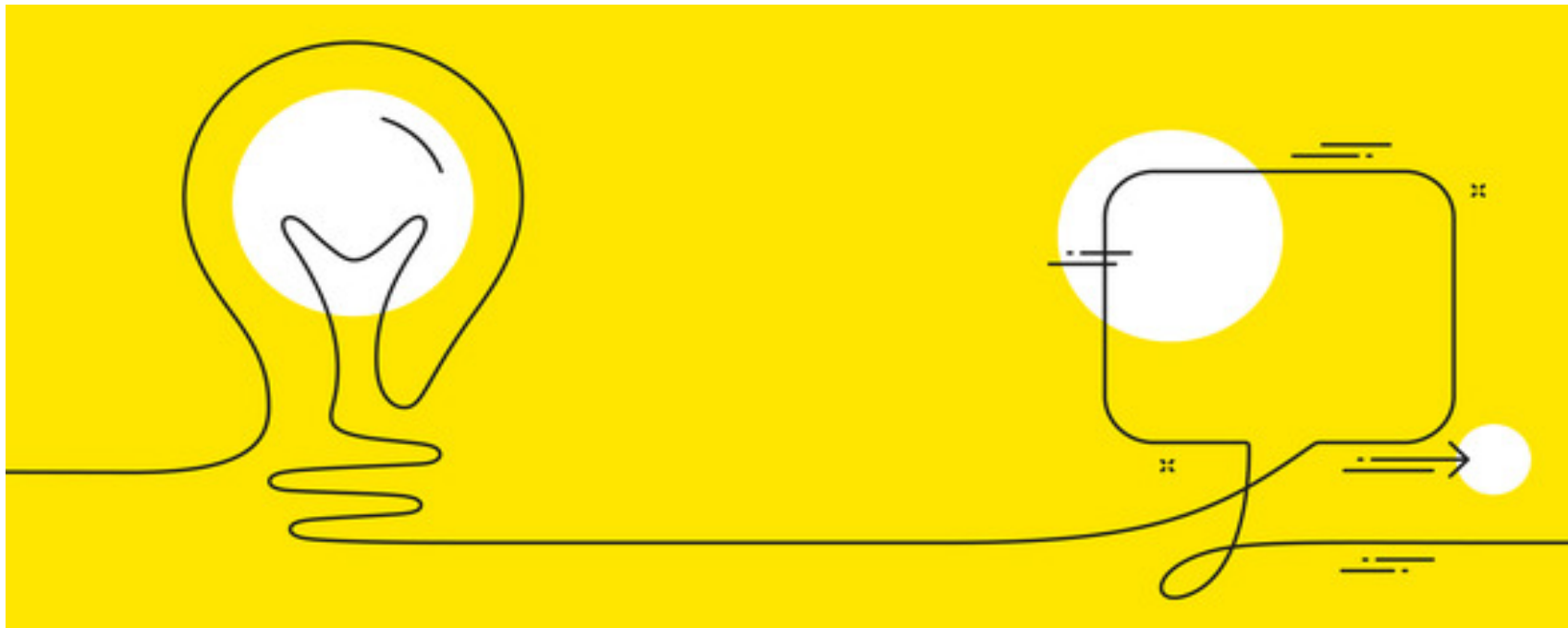
Leveraging Data to Inform and Reform the Criminal Legal System

Ideas/Implications for Connecticut

- Use these state experiences to inform our ongoing work to “facilitate the development and maintenance of a state-wide sentencing database”(CGS § 54-300), and leverage data to evaluate pretrial practices
- Continue to develop the Commission's capacity to deliver on our mandated role in promoting data sharing, transparency, and governance best practices
- Evaluate options to improve data collection across judicial stakeholders

United States Sentencing Commission

Embracing the Public's Ideas to Improve Sentencing, Commission Unanimously Adopts Policy Priorities



United States Sentencing Commission 2024-2025 Priorities

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 8, 2024) — Each year, the bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission votes to adopt priorities that will guide its annual policymaking process.

This summer, the Commission solicited priorities from the public, asking how the agency can improve federal sentencing.

In response, the Commission received more than 1,200 pages of insightful comments from judges, members of Congress, executive branch officials, probation officers, advisory groups, attorneys, professors, advocates, organizations, incarcerated individuals, and others.

United States Sentencing Commission 2024-2025 Priorities

The Commission voted unanimously to commit to prioritize one or more of the clear themes that emerged from the comments it has received, which included:

- Simplifying the federal Sentencing Guidelines and clarifying their role in sentencing.
- Reducing the costs of unnecessary incarceration.
- Promoting public safety.
- Improving community supervision.
- Expanding the Commission's use of expertise, evidence, and best practices.
- Promoting evidence-based approaches to offense and individual characteristics.

Looking Ahead

- Continue discussion of themes and ideas and implications for CT.
- Follow-up on connections made across jurisdictions and with other potential research partners to identify and expand on opportunities for collaboration.
- Continue to track progress on projects and reports in other jurisdictions that can help to inform our work in CT, while looking for opportunities to share our work as well.
- 2025 Conference - presentation and attendance opportunities.
- Host a future conference in Connecticut?

NASC Executive Committee

An Executive Committee elected by the membership at the annual meeting governs the organization. The Executive Committee is comprised of seven members and includes a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and members at large. Executive Committee members may serve two consecutive three-year terms.