

# CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

## Regular Meeting

Thursday, October 23, 2025

### MINUTES

**Members Present:** Judge Robin Pavia (chair), John Santa (vice chair), Gary Roberge, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan (on behalf of the Chief Public Defender), Jennifer Zaccagnini, Patrick Griffin, Stephen Tavares, Jennifer Zito, Anna VanCleave, Daniel Karpowitz, Judge David Gold (on behalf of Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto), Judge Joseph Schwartz, Len Fasano, Fiona Doherty, Jessica Waggoner (on behalf of the DMHAS Commissioner), Merit Lajoie (on behalf of the Victim Advocate)

**Staff:** Andrew Clark, Tommy Dowd, Michael Cronin, Matthew Hono, Rich Sparaco, Jordan Oquendo, Valerie Gordon, Mason Towery

**Guests:** Sachin Pandya, CT-N

#### I. MEETING CONVENED

- Judge Robin Pavia convened the meeting at 1:06 p.m.
- Commission members introduced themselves.

#### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 6.26.2025 MEETING

- The minutes from 6.26.2025 were approved.

#### III. WELCOMING NEW COMMISSION MEMBER FIONA DOHERTY

- Judge Robin Pavia welcomed new Commission member Fiona Doherty, who was recently appointed by Governor Ned Lamont.
  - Doherty is a Nathan Baker Clinical Professor of Law at Yale University.

#### IV. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SENTENCING COMMISSION (NASC) CONFERENCE UPDATE – Rich Sparaco, Interim Executive Director, CTSC; Tommy Dowd, Program Assistant, CTSC; Matthew Hono, Research Technician, CTSC; Jordan Oquendo, Research Intern, CTSC

- Commission staff members Rich Sparaco, Matthew Hono, and Jordan Oquendo presented takeaways from the National Association of Sentencing Commissions Annual Conference, which was held in Madison, Wisconsin, on August 11-12.
- Key themes from the conference included:
  - Aging prison and offender population;

- The benefits of developing partnerships to improve outcomes, data collection, and research;
- Research to understand unique populations within the criminal legal system;
- Conducting impact analyses on criminal justice initiatives and proactive monitoring of outcomes; and
- Understanding where a state's commission falls within the criminal justice system.
- Commission members Gary Roberge and Anna VanCleave, who also attended the conference, added their insights and observations.
- Patrick Griffin noted the launch of a prosecutorial data dashboard.

## V. COMMITTEE UPDATES

### a. Mental Health Committee

#### i. Update on Competency to Stand Trial Report

- Jennifer Zito provided an update on the Competency to Stand Trial Report.
  - The report is a comprehensive analysis of the competency to stand trial system in Connecticut, including procedures, outcomes, and possible areas of improvement.
  - The Mental Health Committee voted to approve the report and present it to the Commission at its December 10 meeting.
- Judge Robin Pavia thanked Jessica Waggoner for her work on the report.

#### ii. Other updates

- Jennifer Zito provided an update on other ongoing mental health research initiatives:
  - A study of the experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system;
  - A study on the use of mental health and addiction treatment by individuals reentering the community; and
  - A comprehensive review of behavioral health diversionary programs in Connecticut.

b. Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee

i. Hate Crime Statutes Report

1. Presentation - Mike Gailor, State's Attorney, Middlesex JD, and Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director, Office of the Chief Public Defender

- Deborah Del Prete Sullivan presented findings from the Hate Crime Statutes Report
  - The Hate Crimes Advisory Council asked the Commission to conduct a review of Connecticut's hate crime statutes.
  - The review uncovered several potential issues, including:
    - Fragmented location of scheme;
    - Multiple intent requirements;
    - Clarity of C.G.S. § 53-37;
    - Consistency of protected groups;
    - Lack of an explicit bias-motivated assault statute; and
    - Sentencing enhancements for persistent offenders.
- Anna VanCleave and John Santa shared concerns with the report.
- Len Fasano and Patrick Griffin asked procedural questions about the report's approval process.

2. Action Item: Vote to adopt report and send to Hate Crimes Advisory Council

- Due to the limited period for review and the presence of lingering concerns, the motion was tabled until the next meeting.
- The report will be returned to the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee for further review.
- Please forward additional comments on the report to Judge Robin Pavia, Rich Sparaco, Mike Gailor, or Deborah Sullivan.

ii. Other updates

- Judge Robin Pavia noted that the Steering Committee voted to create a Pretrial Working Group within the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee.
  - Please reach out to Judge Pavia if you would like to join.
- Rich Sparaco provided an update on other ongoing research initiatives:
  - A study on the experiences and outcomes of individuals who have received parole under Public Act 15-84;
  - A study on human trafficking statutes; and
  - A study on racial and ethnic disparities in sentencing and pretrial outcomes.

#### VI. PRESENTATION ON QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT OF PRETRIAL JUSTICE REPORT – Sachin Pandya, Professor, UConn School of Law, and Matthew Hono, Research Technician, CTSC

- Sachin Pandya presented preliminary findings from the pretrial quantitative report.
  - The report examines pretrial metrics from 2018-2023 using data from CSSD and DOC.
  - The presentation analyzed data from across the pretrial system, specifically regarding arrest, CSSD risk assessment, arraignment, pretrial detention after arraignment, pretrial release, and bond modification/detention review.
  - John Santa, Patrick Griffin, Gary Roberge, Jennifer Zito, Judge David Gold, Judge Robin Pavia, and Fiona Doherty asked follow-up questions.
- If you have additional research questions, please contact Sachin Pandya.
- Rich Sparaco provided an update on the ongoing pretrial qualitative study.
- Daniel Karpowitz and Jennifer Zito highlighted the importance of this issue for the Commission to address.

#### VII. REVIEW OF PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGES

- Over the last few months, the Steering Committee has been reviewing and drafting amendments to the Commission bylaws.
- Judge Robin Pavia outlined the proposed changes.
- Please review the proposed changes and send additional suggestions to Rich Sparaco.
- The Commission will vote on the amended bylaws in December.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

- Judge Robin Pavia adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.