

CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Steering Committee

Monday, November 24, 2025

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Members Present: Judge David Gold (chair), John Santa, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Daniel Karpowitz, Bill Dyson, Jennifer Zito, Michael Gailor, John Day

Staff: Rich Sparaco, Andrew Clark, Tommy Dowd, Matt Hono, Jordan Oquendo, Ken Barone

MINUTES

I. MEETING CONVENED

- Judge David Gold convened the meeting at 1:05 PM.

II. WELCOME AND REMARKS FROM JUDGE GOLD, CHAIR

- Judge Gold briefly introduced himself.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 10.15.2025 MEETING

- The meeting minutes from the 10.15.2025 meeting were approved.
- Judge Gold noted that the proposed bylaw amendments (scheduled to go before the Commission on December 10) provide for proxy voting at advisory committee meetings, but not at Steering Committee meetings.
 - Jennifer Zito reported that the Steering Committee did not consider this inconsistency when crafting the proposed amendments.
 - Judge Gold suggested revisiting the bylaw amendments and postponing their approval.
 - Commission staff will develop additional amendments in accordance with this suggestion.

IV. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

a. Discussion

- Rich Sparaco discussed finalizing the membership lists for the two advisory committees (Mental Health and Criminal Procedure and Sentencing).
 - Sparaco read through the tentative membership lists.

- Jennifer Zito suggested sending the lists to committee co-chairs, developing ideas for additional members, and finalizing the lists at a meeting.
 - Zito highlighted the importance of maintaining an open, welcoming environment in the committees.
 - Michael Gailor reported that the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee reviewed and finalized its membership list at a recent meeting.
- b. Action Item: Vote to approve the committee membership lists
- No action was taken on this agenda item.

V. COMMITTEE UPDATES

- a. Criminal Procedure and Sentencing
- Deborah Del Prete Sullivan provided an update.
 - At its November 18 meeting, the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee voted to send the Hate Crime Statutes Report to the full Commission for approval.
 - The final draft is a product of significant work and compromise from many stakeholders. Sullivan thanked those who contributed to the process.
 - Research initiatives on pretrial release and detention, human trafficking statutes, and domestic violence homicide are ongoing.
- i. Pretrial Working Group
- Daniel Karpowitz provided an update.
 - The working group meets virtually on Fridays (but will not be meeting on 11/28) and includes representation from many key stakeholders.
 - The group is leveraging data to understand Connecticut's pretrial system and examine the merits of potential reforms.
 - The group will produce a written summary of its findings for the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee.
- b. Mental Health
- Jennifer Zito provided an update.

- At its October 14 meeting, the Mental Health Committee voted to send the Competency to Stand Trial Report to the full Commission for approval, pending a few small adjustments.
 - Jessica Waggoner and Dr. Reena Kapoor will present the report's findings and recommendations at the full Commission meeting next month.
- The study on the experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system is due by the end of 2025.
 - Andrew Clark stated that UConn approved the contract with Disability Rights CT to continue this research and that the group is narrowing the study's scope.
- The Committee is also overseeing the study on mental health treatment access for individuals reentering the community and the development of a behavioral health diversionary resource.
- Rich Sparaco also updated members on the Public Act 15-84 Outcomes Study.

VI. UPCOMING SCHEDULE

- a. Full Commission Meeting on December 10th
 - Rich Sparaco reviewed the agenda for the upcoming Commission meeting.
 - The Commission will vote on the Hate Crimes and Competency to Stand Trial Reports.
 - Disability Rights CT may provide an update on the IDD study.
 - The proposed bylaw amendments will be tabled.
 - Andrew Clark and Judge David Gold flagged the process for finalizing Commission reports.
 - Members discussed:
 - The need to clearly define terms like “accept” and “adopt;”
 - The possibility of separating the acceptance of a report from its recommendations;
 - The benefits of using official resolutions to specify Commission actions;
 - The function of committees in thoroughly vetting reports;
 - The possibility of allowing for nuance / levels of acceptance when considering reports; and
 - The difference between reports that are generated by internal vs external researchers.

- Sullivan, Zito, Karpowitz, Clark, Sparaco, and Judge Gold commented.
- Judge Gold suggested raising the issue at the next Commission meeting.

b. 2026 Meeting Schedule

i. Action item: Vote to approve 2026 meeting schedule

- Judge Gold wondered whether the Commission and its committees are meeting too often.
 - Bill Dyson and Sullivan disagreed.
 - Compromise ideas included: moving meetings scheduled in the summer or during the legislative session; holding more meetings remotely; erring on scheduling more meetings rather than fewer and cancelling as needed.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

- Andrew Clark and Ken Barone provided an update on the Executive Director search.
 - UConn approved the position description. The position will be posted in early December and will close on January 16.
 - The search committee will review applications, schedule interviews, and report its recommendations to Clark and Judge Gold.
 - Jennifer Zito suggested adding an update to the agenda for the next Commission meeting.
- Judge Gold adjourned the meeting at 2:48 PM.