

# CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

## Regular Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Legislative Office Building, Room 1A

**Members Present:** Judge David Gold (chair), John Santa (vice chair), Gary Roberge, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, John Day, Jennifer Zaccagnini, Patrick Griffin, Jennifer Zito, Daniel Karpowitz, Judge Joseph Schwartz, Fiona Doherty, Jessica Waggoner (on behalf of the DMHAS Commissioner), Natasha Pierre, Alex Knopp, Sarah Karwan (on behalf of the DESPP Commissioner), Michael Gailor, Bill Dyson, Judge Courtney Chaplin, Anna VanCleave

**Staff:** Andrew Clark, Tommy Dowd, Michael Cronin, Matthew Hono, Rich Sparaco, Jordan Oquendo, Lydia Wileden

**Guests:** Dr. Reena Kapoor, CT-N

## AGENDA

- I. MEETING CONVENED
  - Judge David Gold convened the meeting at 1:09 PM.
  
- II. WELCOME AND REMARKS FROM JUDGE DAVID GOLD, NEWLY APPOINTED CHAIR, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JUDGE ROBIN PAVIA, OUTGOING CHAIR
  - Judge David Gold, newly appointed chair of the Sentencing Commission, introduced himself to members.
  - Judge Gold thanked Judge Robin Pavia, the recently departed chair, for her leadership and dedication.
  
- III. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
  - Judge Gold welcomed three new members of the Commission.
    - Justice Joan Alexander is joining the Commission in her capacity as the Chief Court Administrator.
    - Judge Courtney Chaplin was appointed to the Commission by Chief Justice Raheem Mullins. Judge Chaplin fills the vacancy left by Judge Gerald Harmon, whose term recently expired.

- Alex Knopp was appointed to the Commission by Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff.
- Members took turns introducing themselves.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 10.23.2025 MEETING

- The minutes from the 10.23.2025 meeting were approved.
  - Judge Courtney Chaplin and Alex Knopp abstained because they were not present at the meeting.

#### V. COMMITTEE UPDATES

##### a. Mental Health Committee

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

##### 1. Presentation - Jessica Waggoner, LCSW, Director, DMHAS Forensic Services Division, and Reena Kapoor, MD, Director, Yale School of Medicine Law and Psychiatry Division

- Jessica Waggoner and Dr. Reena Kapoor presented the report's findings.
  - The presentation (1) reviewed related jurisprudence; (2) surveyed best practices from other jurisdictions and the academic literature; (3) described the study's methodology; (4) summarized the competency to stand trial process in Connecticut; (5) and analyzed statistical trends in the competency to stand trial process.
- Rich Sparaco presented the report's recommendations.
  - The recommendations include: (1) convening diverse stakeholders; (2) enhancing data collection and sharing; (3) increasing diversion from the competency evaluation/restoration pathway; (4) enhancing outpatient and community residential restoration services; (5) improving oversight of individuals found non-restorable of serious charges; (6) investigating best practices for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism; and (7) enhancing knowledge of individuals with dementia and acquired brain injuries in the competency system.
- Jennifer Zito, Patrick Griffin, and Bill Dyson commented on the presentation.

2. Action Items: (1) Vote to accept report and (2) vote to adopt recommendations

- Rich Sparaco briefly explained the voting process.
- The Commission unanimously voted to (1) accept the report and (2) adopt its recommendations.
- Deborah Del Prete Sullivan requested that, within each paragraph, one sentence be highlighted to succinctly capture the core recommendation.
- Daniel Karpowitz, Jennifer Zito, and Bill Dyson provided further comments.

ii. Other updates

- Jennifer Zito provided an update.
  - The Committee is continuing to make progress on three other studies: (1) an exploration of the experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system; (2) an evaluation of mental health and addiction treatment access for individuals reentering the community; and (3) a catalogue of behavioral health diversionary programs in Connecticut.
  - The first two studies are on track for completion in early 2026.

b. Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee

i. Hate Crime Statutes Report

1. Discussion

- Michael Gailor and Deborah Del Prete Sullivan thanked Commission members for their contributions to the report.
- They further acknowledged the compromises that were necessary to reach consensus on the report.
- Sullivan asked to highlight one sentence within each paragraph that sums up the recommendation.

2. Action Item: Vote to accept report and transmit to Hate Crimes Advisory Council

- The Commission considered whether to take separate votes to accept the report and adopt its recommendations.

- Natasha Pierre and Bill Dyson argued that it should be standard practice to accept the report and approve its recommendations in separate motions.
- The Commission decided to take two separate votes.
- The Commission unanimously voted to (1) accept the report and (2) adopt its recommendations.
- The report is hereby transmitted to the Governor's Hate Crimes Advisory Council.

ii. Pretrial Working Group

- Karpowitz provided an update.
  - The group is leveraging data to evaluate Connecticut's pretrial system, including the effects of prior reforms.
  - The working group meets remotely every Friday.
  - Materials for the meetings are on the Commission's website.

iii. Other Updates

- Deborah Del Prete Sullivan briefly noted the Committee's research into human trafficking and domestic violence homicide.

VI. UPDATE ON AMENDMENTS TO COMMISSION BYLAWS

- Rich Sparaco provided an update.
  - The Commission was going to consider amendments to its bylaws at today's meeting, but additional concerns were raised at the last Steering Committee meeting.
  - The Steering Committee will continue to discuss the issue.
  - Ideally, the Commission will review the finalized amendments in February and approve the amendments in April.
- Sparaco also updated members on three additional reports: (1) a study on the potential challenges to creating a sentencing database; (2) a study on the experiences of individuals who were granted parole under Public Act 15-84; and (3) a study on disparities in sentencing and pretrial outcomes.

VII. UPDATE ON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH PROCESS

- Andrew Clark provided an update.
  - Clark reminded members that the posting is open and reviewed the next steps and timeline for the process.
  - Daniel Karpowitz asked a follow-up question.

## VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

### a. 2026 Proposed Meeting Schedule

- The schedule will be revisited due to scheduling conflicts.
- Commission staff will circulate the schedule when it is finalized.
- Jennifer Zito notified members that new rules regarding proxy voting may take effect next year.
  - Bill Dyson shared concerns about these rules.

### b. Other

- Judge David Gold adjourned the meeting at 2:50 PM.