

CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Pretrial Working Group

January 23, 2026

1:30pm - 2:30pm

Meeting Minutes

- I. Introduction, Rich Sparaco, IMRP
 - a. Last meeting, a consensus to increase number of pretrial mental health beds for men, and to create residential treatment beds for women. We will send the recommendation to full Sentencing Commission on 2-11. Some questions remain since it requires funding and depends on budget.
 - i. Mike Aiello – Specific for pretrial, or for probation in community as well?
 - ii. Daniel Karpowitz – It was passed for pretrial, but speaking with legislators, they realize it's part of the broader landscape.
- II. Approval of Minutes from the January 16, 2026, Meeting of the Working Group
 - a. Rich Sparaco – Minutes from 1-16-2026 meeting were approved by a voice vote.
- III. FTA Continued: Prevalence and Policy Options
 - a. Matt Hono- Prior Findings
 - i. 40-50% of those held on misdemeanor charges pretrial have at least one FTA pending at the time of admission.
 - ii. ~38,000 active FTA warrants as of 12/31/2025.
 - b. Goals for today
 - i. Understand the prevalence.
 - ii. Does history of FTA, without controlling for other factors, increase likelihood of defendant being detained?
 - iii. Possible policy interventions – Decrease impact of FTA on decision making? Increase appearance rates?
 - c. Key points-
 - i. FTA warrants more common than VOP warrants (only 5,000 active VOP warrants)
 - ii. Vast majority of active FTA warrants are for misdemeanors, as of 9/30/25
 - iii. Pandemic era active, issued, and ordered warrants were much lower than other periods.
 - iv. More warrants issued than served per quarter.
 - v. 17-20% have active FTA warrants at time of arrest.

- d. John DelBarba – Historically, after 5 years if misdemeanors, some courts have nulled FTA warrants.
- e. Daniel Karpowitz- Would we be able to estimate the number older than five years annually?
 - i. Not yet at point to discuss reforms. Look to other jurisdictions later and can compare programs.
 - ii. Is one benefit of pretrial detention to solve problems with FTAs? No longer a problem if at DOC.
- f. Gary Roberge – Don't know if pretrial is used for FTA, but it's a result of FTA. Sometimes many conditions of release. Was not aware that prosecutors were vacating rearrest and nolling FTA charges.
 - i. John DelBarba – It has happened.
 - ii. Mike Gailor – It's not the norm. Most of the time plead to underlying charge.
- g. Mike Hines – 38,000, can we find out what that is in bodies? One person might have multiple counts and warrants. How many individuals are facing FTA warrants.
- h. Daniel Karpowitz – Who is local CIS advocate on the call? Crazy we can't figure out how many people that 38,000 warrants involves/ Flag this for the future to have data track individuals in the system, those impacted, not the number of paper warrants or dockets.
 - i. Related point – how to get people back in court for fewest times possible, related to continuances and length of process.
- i. Rich Sparaco – This is all public data we are using. We have no links to internal datasets to answer these issues.
 - i. Joe Greelish – PRAWN fully online in 2004. When Clean Slate was being implemented, difficulty in trying to find if person was the same person for multiple charges. More so for misdemeanors. No fingerprints or DNA. Tough to ascertain they are the same person. System doesn't collect at entry point clear identifiable data, going backward was hard.
- j. Matt Hono – With the exception of COVID-19, from 2018-2023, 17% to 20% of arrestees interviewed by CSSD had an active FTA warrant at the time of arrest.
 - i. 41% to 47% of arrestees interviewed by CSSD had an either active FTA warrant at the time of arrest or at least one prior failure to appear on their record.
 - ii. 2018 to 2023 – Those with a history of FTA had a higher detention rate than no prior FTA.
 - 1. No prior FTA – 38% detained pretrial
 - 2. Prior Felony FTA – 65% detained pretrial
 - 3. Prior misdemeanor FTA – 56% detained pretrial

- iii. Current risk assessment:
 - 1. FTA within 2 years weighted heavier than an FTA older than two years
 - 2. FTA within 2 years weighted same as three or more prior convictions plus additional set of pending charges.
 - iv. Gary Roberge – 13% FTA rate for those released on nonfinancial conditions, national rate is 18%. Can opt into text message reminders for court dates. Courts are up to try any possible solution to improve appearance rates.
 - v. Mike Hines – Starts with the first time they fail to appear. They get a letter, or even multiple letters. Don't get an FTA. We ask if they opt in for reminders. Get two notices. Some get phone calls. Night staff calls. Have taken some steps, and made some progress.
 - k. Matt Hono – Adjusting of weight of FTAs possible approaches
 - i. Don't consider those older than 5 years?
 - ii. Declassify misdemeanor FTAs to lower class of misdemeanor?
 - iii. Use intermediate sanctions before issuing warrants- letters, sign and release warrants?
 - iv. Grace periods?
 - l. Matt Hono – Possible approaches to increase appearances
 - i. Reduction of required in-person court appearances?
 - ii. Post-arraignment meetings?
 - iii. Opt-out rather than opt-in text reminders for court dates?
 - iv. Expand text reminders?
 - v. Behaviorally designed court forms?
 - vi. Transportation assistance
 - m. Brittany Lamarr – Re how to get defendants back to court. The issue is people are scared or they are struggling with other issues. Might fail a drug test. Maybe the judicial response to those issues need addressing in order to improve appearance rates.
- IV. Daniel Karpowitz – Schedule – Tempo – Format
 - a. Soliciting feedback on the frequency and format of upcoming meetings. Send email or share next time. It's a collaborative effort. Think of how best to proceed going forward.
 - b. A summary narrative account will be circulated soon, feel free to mark it up.
- V. Adjourn 2:33