

CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Steering Committee

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Members Present: Judge David Gold (chair), Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Daniel Karpowitz, Bill Dyson, Jennifer Zito, Michael Gailor, John DelBarba (on behalf of the Chief Public Defender)

Staff: Rich Sparaco, Andrew Clark, Tommy Dowd, Matthew Hono, Jordan Oquendo, Mike Cronin

AGENDA

- I. MEETING CONVENED
 - Judge Gold convened the meeting at 1:21 PM.
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 11.24.2025 MEETING
 - The minutes from the 11.24.2025 meeting were approved.
- III. COMMITTEE UPDATES
 - a. Criminal Procedure and Sentencing
 - Deborah Sullivan provided an update.
 - At its Dec 10 meeting, the Commission unanimously approved the Report on Hate Crime Statutes. The report has since been transmitted to the Governor's Hate Crimes Advisory Council.
 - The Committee met on Jan 20 and heard a presentation from Brian Austin regarding the Early Screen and Intervention (ESI) Program.
 - Commission staff are continuing to work on three studies that fall under the purview of this committee: (1) a two-part pretrial study; (2) a study on Connecticut's human trafficking statutes; and (3) a study on sentencing outcomes in cases of domestic violence homicide.
 - Daniel Karpowitz, Andrew Clark, and Matthew Hono provided context on the pretrial report and how it relates to the pretrial working group.
 - Michael Gailor discussed the prospect of having an ESI presentation at the Feb 11 Commission meeting.
 - Sullivan shared some reservations about the ESI Program but supported having the presentation at the meeting.

i. Pretrial Working Group

- Daniel Karpowitz provided an update.
 - The working group is studying pretrial trends and policies in Connecticut, including misdemeanor detention rates, misdemeanor lengths of stay, and overall failure to appear trends.
 - The group will soon transition to discuss pretrial detention policies in felony cases.
 - The group endorsed a proposal to increase funding for pretrial mental health beds.
- Bill Dyson asked about the ultimate goals of the group.
 - Karpowitz and Andrew Clark noted that the group is working closely with the General Assembly to inform possible policy changes.
 - Committee members discussed how the Commission should engage the legislature generally.

b. Mental Health

- Jennifer Zito provided an update.
 - At its Dec 10 meeting, the Commission unanimously approved the Report on Competency to Stand Trial.
 - The Committee is meeting on Jan 28 at 1PM. At the meeting, the Committee will consider whether to forward the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Report to the full Commission.
 - The Committee is continuing to oversee two additional research initiatives: (1) a study on mental health and substance abuse treatment after release from prison; and (2) a study cataloguing behavioral health diversionary programs in Connecticut.
- Judge Gold will work on finding another co-chair for this committee.

IV. STUDY ON PUBLIC ACT 15-84 OUTCOMES

a. Discussion

- Rich Sparaco provided background on the report, which analyzes the experiences of individuals who have received parole under Public Act 15-84.
 - Researchers from the School of Social Work will present the report's findings at the Feb 11 meeting.

- Andrew Clark explained that this report was intended to evaluate Public Act 15-84, which the Commission was instrumental in enacting.
- The Commission may consider taking a position on related legislation this session.

b. Vote to send report to full Commission

- The Commission will consider the report on Feb 11.

V. 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

a. Discussion

- Rich Sparaco provided an update.
 - This report is a statutorily required update on the Commission's activities in 2025.
 - The 2025 report includes budgetary information.
 - The report will be re-circulated when it is finalized.

b. Vote to send report to full Commission

- The Commission will consider the report in April.

VI. DISCUSSION ON AMENDMENTS TO COMMISSION BYLAWS

- Rich Sparaco provided an update on the latest amendments to the bylaws.
- Committee members discussed whether co-chairs should be on the Steering Committee.
 - Members decided that the co-chairs should not officially be on the Steering Committee.
- Members may send additional comments to Judge Gold.
- The changes will be submitted to the Commission on Feb 11.

VII. 2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

- Deborah Sullivan asked whether the Commission could endorse legislation that was not explicitly proposed by the body.
 - Rich Sparaco and Judge Gold agreed that the Commission may weigh in on active legislation.
- Committee members discussed the expansion of parole eligibility initially set forth by Public Act 23-169.

VIII. UPDATE ON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

- Andrew Clark provided an update.

- The job posting has been extended into February due to the low number of applicants.
- It will be posted on the Commission website.

IX. UPCOMING SCHEDULE

- a. Full Commission meeting on February 11
 - Judge Gold discussed nominating three Commission members to serve on the Steering Committee, which will be approved by the Commission.
 - The meeting agenda for the Feb 11 meeting was circulated by email.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

- Judge Gold adjourned the meeting at 2:45 PM.