



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**Connecticut Sentencing
Commission**

2025 Annual Report

Connecticut Sentencing Commission



Report to the Governor,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
President of the Senate,
and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,
pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 54-300(p)

Judge David Gold
Chair

Rich Sparaco
Interim Executive Director

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Acknowledgments

The Connecticut Sentencing Commission celebrated its fifteenth year of service in 2025. Created by Public Act 10-129,¹ and governed by C.G.S. § 54-300,² the Commission continues to be a forum for objective analysis and collaborative policy making as it pursues a criminal justice system that maximizes safety, liberty, and rehabilitation.

This year was marked by significant transition for the Commission:

In December, Judge Robin Pavia stepped down as Chair of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission after serving in the role since 2021. During her tenure, Judge Pavia led the Commission with wisdom and grace, guiding several significant policy initiatives, including reforms to the competency to stand trial system, an expansion of juvenile parole, and the repeal of certain mandatory minimums. She departed from the Commission to focus on her new responsibilities as Chief Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters, where she will undoubtedly continue to demonstrate the same compassionate and insightful leadership that she brought to this role. The Commission extends its sincere gratitude to Judge Pavia for her dedicated service and wishes her continued success in this new chapter.

To fill the vacancy, Judge David Gold was appointed Chair of the Commission. Judge Gold joins the Commission after serving on the bench for 25 years, including as the Chief Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters since 2020. The Commission is pleased to welcome Judge Gold and looks forward to his contributions in the years ahead!

The Commission also bid farewell to longtime Executive Director Alex Tsarkov in 2025. Hired in 2015 as the Commission's first full-time executive director, Tsarkov advanced several major research and policy initiatives in areas such as pretrial justice, juvenile parole, sexual offender sentencing, and the intersection of mental illness and the criminal justice system. He leaves the Commission to join the Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles, where he was nominated by Governor Ned Lamont to serve as a Board member. We thank Tsarkov for the enthusiastic commitment he brought to this Commission and its goals.

While the Commission is searching for a permanent replacement, Rich Sparaco was selected and generously agreed to serve as the interim executive director. Sparaco joins the Commission with a wealth of knowledge about Connecticut's criminal justice system, having previously served as the Executive Director of the Board of Pardons and Paroles for nearly a decade. Assuming the role in June, he has provided steady leadership during this period of transition.

Furthermore, the Commission thanks Vice Chair John Santa, who has held the position since 2017. Santa was appointed to the Commission for his work as the Founder and Chairman of the Malta Justice Initiative. His moral clarity and attention to detail are imperative to the operation of this Commission.

¹ Conn. Public Act 10-129, "An Act Establishing a Sentencing Commission." <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2010/ACT/PA/2010PA-00129R00HB-05248-PA.htm>.

² Conn. Gen. Stat. § 54-300. Sentencing Commission. https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_970.htm#sec_54-300.

As always, the Commission is deeply grateful to its membership, the engine of its research and policy activities. The Commission values the unique perspective of each of its members as it seeks to enact consensus-based criminal justice policies. Much of our work takes place at the committee level, so we extend special thanks to members of the Steering, Mental Health, and Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committees for their continued engagement and dedication.

The Commission could not function effectively without the support of numerous external partners, including state agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic experts, community members, and criminal justice leaders in other jurisdictions. We express our gratitude to these partners for supporting and enriching our work.

In 2025, the Commission was proud to recognize two recipients of the Justice David Borden Fellowship: Christian Isidoro and Mason Towery. Named after David Borden, a former Connecticut Supreme Court Justice and the first chair of the Sentencing Commission, the fellowship supports law students who are passionate about criminal justice issues and eager to contribute to the Commission's research and policy initiatives. Christian Isidoro, a third-year student at the Quinnipiac University School of Law, has worked with the Commission since May 2024. Mason Towery, a second-year student at the Quinnipiac University School of Law, has previously worked for the New Jersey Superior Court Family Division and the Connecticut Office of the Chief Public Defender. Other part-time Commission staff this year include Matthew Hono; Jordan Oquendo, UConn School of Public Policy; Chenoa Greenlee, UConn School of Social Work; Jenna D'Ottavino, UConn School of Social Work; Skylar Seabert, Quinnipiac University School of Law; Hannah Gorham, Quinnipiac University School of Law; Josephine Burke, UConn; and Ava Caudle, Trinity College.

Finally, the Commission notes with great sadness the passing of Robert Farr, a valued member of the Commission since 2015. Farr brought a robust knowledge of criminal justice issues from his experience in the General Assembly and on the Board of Pardons and Paroles. His service and insight will be remembered with deep gratitude.

Commission Membership

As of December 31, 2025

David Gold, Chair
Judge Trial Referee, J.D. & G.A. 9 Courthouse
Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

John Santa, Vice Chair
Chairman, Malta Justice Initiative
Appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate

Fiona Doherty
Nathan Baker Clinical Professor of Law, Yale University
Appointed by the Governor

Joan Alexander
Chief Court Administrator
Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Courtney Chaplin
Presiding Part-B Criminal Judge, Judicial District of Hartford
Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Joseph B. Schwartz
Superior Court Judge, J.D. & G.A. 14 Courthouse
Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Gary Roberge
Executive Director, Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division
Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Anna VanCleave
Associate Professor of Law, University of Connecticut
Appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate

William R. Dyson
Former Member, Connecticut House of Representatives
Appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives

Alex Knopp
Former Member, Connecticut House of Representatives
Appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate

Vacant
Appointed by the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives

Len Fasano
Former Member, Connecticut Senate
Appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives

Commission Membership

As of December 31, 2025

Jennifer Zito

Criminal Defense Attorney

Appointed by the President of the Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

Michael A. Gailor

State's Attorney, Middlesex J.D.

Appointed by the Chief State's Attorney

Stephen Tavares

Chief of Police, Eastern Connecticut State University

Appointed by the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

Patrick Griffin

Chief State's Attorney

Ex officio, Chief State's Attorney

John Day

Acting Chief Public Defender

Ex officio, Chief Public Defender

Daniel Karpowitz

Undersecretary, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, Office of Policy and Management

Ex officio, Undersecretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning

Natasha Pierre

State Victim Advocate

Ex officio, State Victim Advocate

Jennifer Medina Zaccagnini

Chair, Board of Pardons and Paroles

Ex officio, Chair of the Board of Pardons and Paroles

Ronnell Higgins

Commissioner, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection

Ex officio, Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection

Nancy Navarretta

Commissioner, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Ex officio, Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Angel Quiros

Commissioner, Department of Correction

Ex officio, Commissioner of Correction

Committee Membership & Commission Staff

As of December 31, 2025

STEERING COMMITTEE

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Judge David Gold, <i>Chair</i>	Judicial District of Middlesex
John Santa, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Malta Justice Initiative
Michael Gailor	Division of Criminal Justice
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan	Division of Public Defender Services
Jennifer Zito	Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
Daniel Karpowitz	Office of Policy and Management
William Dyson	Connecticut General Assembly
John Day	Division of Public Defender Services
Patrick Griffin	Division of Criminal Justice
Joan Alexander	Judicial Branch

COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Jennifer Zito, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
John Santa	Malta Justice Initiative
Jessica Waggoner	Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thomas Canny	Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan	Division of Public Defender Services
Gary Roberge	Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division
Angel Quiros	Department of Correction
Daniel Karpowitz	Office of Policy and Management
Reena Kapoor	Yale University
William O'Connor	Division of Public Defender Services
Len Fasano	Connecticut General Assembly

COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL PROCEDURE & SENTENCING

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Division of Public Defender Services
Michael Gailor, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Division of Criminal Justice
Anna VanCleave	University of Connecticut School of Law
Lisa D'Angelo	Division of Criminal Justice
Bryan Sperry	Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division
Angel Quiros	Department of Correction
John Santa	Malta Justice Initiative
Michael Hines	Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division
Gary Roberge	Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division
Jennifer Zito	Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
Rob Cristiano	Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division

Joseph Garibaldi	Board of Pardons and Paroles
Patrick Griffin	Division of Criminal Justice
Judge Joseph Schwartz	Judicial District of Hartford
Marc Pelka	Judicial Branch Office of Victim Services
Colin Milne	Board of Pardons and Paroles

COMMISSION STAFF

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>
Rich Sparaco	Interim Executive Director
Andrew Clark	Commission Advisor
Tommy Dowd	Program Assistant
Christian Isidoro	Justice David Borden Fellow
Mason Towery	Justice David Borden Fellow
Matthew Hono	Research Technician
Jordan Oquendo	Research Technician
Mike Cronin	Research Technician

Executive Summary

Convening six times in 2025, the Connecticut Sentencing Commission continued to research and pursue solutions for criminal justice issues in the state.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for overseeing the Commission’s research and policy initiatives, managing administration and governance, and coordinating the affairs of the Commission between its business meetings.

Pursuant to these duties, the Committee completed its first comprehensive review of the Commission’s bylaws since 2016. The recommended updates yielded by this review will be considered by the full Commission in early 2026.

The Committee also guided three major research initiatives, including a feasibility study for a statewide sentencing database, a study on outcomes for individuals paroled under Public Act 15-84, and a legislatively mandated analysis of disparities in pretrial and sentencing outcomes. Final reports are expected for these projects in 2026.



The Commission typically meets in person at the Legislative Office Building.

Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee

The Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee continued its broad examination of pretrial and sentencing policies in 2025.

The Commission unanimously accepted the [Report on Hate Crime Statutes](#) at its December 10 meeting.³ Fulfilling a 2023 request from the Governor’s Hate Crimes Advisory Council (See Appendix D), the report evaluates whether Connecticut's hate crime laws are constitutional, coherent, consistent, and comprehensive.

Pretrial release and detention remains a key focus of the Committee. In 2025, the Committee established a pretrial working group, chaired by Undersecretary Daniel Karpowitz. The group convenes various stakeholders to analyze the performance of the pretrial system to date, improve data collection, assess the impacts of previous reforms, and serve as a resource for the Connecticut General Assembly and relevant state agencies. A narrative document summarizing the group’s work to date is expected in early 2026.

The Committee is also overseeing a two-pronged study of pretrial procedures, including (1) a quantitative examination of pretrial outcomes in Connecticut from booking at a police department to detention in a correctional facility and (2) a comparative legal analysis of jurisdictions that have implemented intentional pretrial systems.

³ Connecticut Network. “Connecticut Sentencing Commission December 10th Meeting.” (December 10, 2025). <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=25669>.

Aside from these studies, the Committee made progress on two additional research projects. One study, requested by State Representative Jillian Gilcrest and the Trafficking in Persons Council (see Appendix E), compares Connecticut’s human trafficking statutes with corresponding federal law. The other study, requested by State Representatives Steven Stafstrom and Raghiv Allie-Brennan (see Appendix F), examines sentencing outcomes in domestic violence homicide cases. Both studies are expected to conclude in 2026.

Finally, a Committee-endorsed recommendation became official policy this year. The Judicial Branch now permits judges to authorize bail commissioners to revisit low bonds set on bench warrants (see Appendix I).⁴ Previously, bail commissioners could only revisit bonds set by local police departments, not those set by warrants.

Mental Health Committee

The Mental Health Committee continued to lead the Commission’s research on the intersection of behavioral health and the justice system in 2025, advancing multiple projects supported by a legislative appropriation.

The Commission unanimously accepted the [Report on Competency to Stand Trial](#) at its December 10 meeting.⁵ The report details the competency to stand trial process in Connecticut, analyzes trends in administrative data, and provides policy recommendations for lawmakers to consider.

Additionally, the Committee continued work on three other studies. The first study, mandated by Public Act 23-137 (see Appendix G),⁶ and conducted in collaboration with Disability Rights Connecticut, examines the experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system. The second study, undertaken with researchers at the Yale SEICHE Center for Health and Justice, examines access to mental health treatment for individuals reentering the community. The third study seeks to catalogue and present outcome data on behavioral health diversionary programs in Connecticut.



The Connecticut Sentencing Commission convenes on December 10, 2025.

⁴ State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Superior Court. “PRAWN Arrest Warrant and Application: Revised March 2025.” https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CR067_PRAWN25.pdf.

⁵ Connecticut Network, *supra* note 3.

⁶ Conn. Public Act 23-137, “An Act Concerning Resources and Support Services for Persons with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability.” <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2023/act/pa/pdf/2023PA-00137-R00HB-05001-PA.pdf>.

Legislative Activities

In 2025, the Sentencing Commission submitted two legislative proposals to the Judiciary Committee.

1. The first [proposal](#) closed a loophole in Connecticut’s police chokehold statute by permitting the use of a chokehold in defense of a third person. This recommendation advanced through the Judiciary Committee unanimously and was enacted as section 9 of Public Act 25-29 (see Appendix H).⁷
2. The second [proposal](#) sought to expand the Supervised Diversionary Program to individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. Although it received unanimous committee support as section 9 of House Bill 7259,⁸ it was removed from the bill before its passage as Public Act 25-29⁹ due to fiscal and administrative concerns. The Commission continues to study this issue as part of its broader work on intellectual and developmental disabilities in the justice system.

⁷ Conn. House Bill 7259, “An Act Concerning Revisions to Various Statutes Concerning Criminal Justice.” (2025). <https://cga.ct.gov/2025/TOB/H/PDF/2025HB-07259-R01-HB.PDF>

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Conn. Public Act 25-29, “An Act Concerning Revisions to Various Statutes Concerning Criminal Justice.” <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2025/ACT/PA/PDF/2025PA-00029-R00HB-07259-PA.PDF>

I. Mission and Membership

The Connecticut Sentencing Commission was established by Public Act 10-129, and first convened on February 24, 2011.¹⁰ Its mission, as stated in Connecticut General Statute (C.G.S.) § 54-300 (see Appendix A), is to "review the existing criminal sentencing structure in the state and any proposed changes thereto, including existing statutes, proposed criminal justice legislation and existing and proposed sentencing policies and practices and make recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly, and appropriate criminal justice agencies."¹¹

The Commission advances its understanding of criminal justice issues through empirical research, data analysis, and the study of best practices in sentencing policy. It combines these findings with the expertise of its diverse membership to develop consensus-based recommendations that enhance public safety, promote rehabilitation, and ensure fair and proportionate punishment.



Judge David Gold, Chair of the Sentencing Commission

C.G.S. § 54-300 sets forth the membership of the Commission, which consists of 23 stakeholders from across the criminal justice system, including judges; prosecutors; criminal defense attorneys; the Chief State's Attorney; the Chief Public Defender; the State Victim Advocate; the chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BOPP); the undersecretary of the Office of Policy and Management's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (OPM-CJPPD); the commissioners of the Departments of Correction (DOC), Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), and Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS); a municipal police chief; and appointees from the Governor and legislative leaders.¹²



John Santa, Vice Chair of the Sentencing Commission

The Commission was pleased to welcome a new chair in 2025. Appointed by the Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, Judge David Gold joins the Commission after retiring as the chief administrative judge for criminal matters. This transition was bittersweet, as the Commission also bid farewell to its outgoing chair, Judge Robin Pavia. She leaves the Commission to focus on her new position as the chief administrative judge for criminal matters. The Commission extends its sincere gratitude to Judge Pavia for her years of dedicated leadership and wishes her well in this new role.

Four additional members joined the Commission this year: Justice Joan Alexander, incoming Chief Court Administrator; Judge Courtney Chaplin, Presiding Part-B Criminal Judge; Len Fasano, former state senator; and Fiona Doherty, Nathan Baker Clinical Professor of Law at Yale University. Five additional members resigned from the Commission: Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto, outgoing Chief Court Administrator; Judge Gerald Harmon, Presiding Part-A Criminal Judge; Michael Chase, defense attorney; Sarah

¹⁰ Conn. Public Act 10-129, *supra* note 1.

¹¹ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 54-300, *supra* note 2.

¹² *Id.*

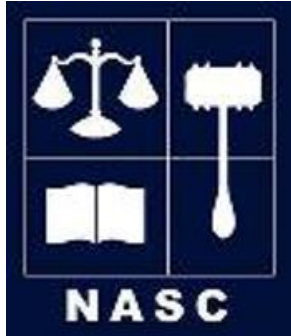
Russell, former Professor of Law at Quinnipiac University; and Subira Gordon, former Executive Director of ConnCAN. Finally, we are deeply saddened to acknowledge the passing of one of our members, former State Representative Robert Farr. We thank him for his years of public service, not just to this Commission, but to the entire state of Connecticut.

Administrative and research support for the Commission is provided by staff members at the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy within the School of Public Policy at the University of Connecticut. The Commission also engages various external partners, including academic experts, practitioners, and agency leaders, to conduct research and explore policy reforms.



The Commission is staffed by the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy, located at the University of Connecticut Hartford Campus.

II. National Overview



The National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) brings together sentencing policy bodies from across the country to share knowledge and best practices. Comprised of 22 jurisdictions, its goal is “to facilitate the exchange and sharing of information, ideas, data, expertise, and experiences and to educate individuals on issues related to sentencing policies and guidelines and commissions.” This collaboration is critical, allowing members of NASC to gain insights into effective processes for data collection and analysis, novel research topics and methods, emerging criminal justice trends, and strategies for policy development and implementation.¹³ More information about NASC can be found [here](#).

2025 NASC Annual Conference

The 2025 NASC Annual Conference was held on August 11-12, in Madison, Wisconsin. Hosted by the Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council, the conference was themed *The Future of Sentencing Commissions*.¹⁴ Plenary sessions and panel discussions covered a wide range of criminal justice topics, including the use of artificial intelligence by sentencing commissions, evaluation of justice reinvestment initiatives, administrative and logistical strategies for managing commissions, and approaches for leveraging data to inform evidence-based sentencing policy. Each sentencing commission reported on its recent activities and initiatives during the "All State Update" section, further encouraging cross-jurisdictional sharing of information. Additional information about the conference can be found [here](#).



The 2025 NASC Annual Conference was held in Madison, Wisconsin.

The Connecticut Sentencing Commission sent a seven-member delegation of commissioners and staff to the conference. Commissioners Gary Roberge, Executive Director of the Judicial Branch’s Court Support Services Division, and Anna VanCleave, Professor of Law at the University of Connecticut, attended alongside Commission staff from the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy: Rich Sparaco, Interim Executive Director; Lydia Wileden, Assistant Research Professor; Tommy Dowd, Program Assistant; Matthew Hono, Research Technician; and Jordan Oquendo, Research Intern. During the conference, Rich Sparaco provided an update on the Commission’s recent initiatives, highlighting its ongoing work in pretrial justice and the intersection of mental illness and the criminal justice system.

¹³ National Association of Sentencing Commissions. “Who we are.” <https://www.thenasc.org/about>.

¹⁴ National Association of Sentencing Commissions. “NASC 2025 Conference.” <https://www.thenasc.org/2025-conference>.

Rich Sparaco, Matthew Hono, and Jordan Oquendo presented takeaways from the conference at the Commission's October meeting.¹⁵ Among the key themes were: (1) tracking aging prison and offender populations; (2) developing partnerships to improve research and data processes; (3) examining unique populations within the criminal justice system; (4) monitoring outcomes and conducting impact analyses; and (5) understanding where a state's commission falls within its respective criminal justice system.

¹⁵ Sparaco, Rich, Matthew Hono, and Jordan Oquendo. "2025 National Association of Sentencing Commissions Annual Conference Themes." PowerPoint presented to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. (October 23, 2025). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025-NASC-Presentation.pdf>

III. Activities of the Commission

COMMISSION MEETINGS

As required by statute, the Sentencing Commission convenes at least quarterly. In 2025, the Commission held five meetings: January 9,¹⁶ March 27,¹⁷ June 26,¹⁸ October 23,¹⁹ and December 10.²⁰ Meetings were held either remotely via Zoom, or in person at the Legislative Office Building.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is responsible for managing the Commission’s administrative affairs, such as appointing committee members, setting meeting schedules, and reviewing internal policies and bylaws; making policy and procedural recommendations to the full body; overseeing certain research initiatives; and maintaining general supervision of the Commission between business meetings.

According to Commission bylaws, the Steering Committee is composed of the Commission chair and vice chair; the Chief Court Administrator; the Chief State’s Attorney; the Chief Public Defender; the undersecretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning; and three Commission members elected by the full body. Additionally, the chairs of any committees and the executive director are ex-officio members without a vote.²¹

The Steering Committee meets at the discretion of the chair, typically convening about 6-8 times annually. In 2025, the Committee met seven times: March 13, April 25, June 24, August 14, September 22, October 15, and November 24. Most meetings were held in person at the Hartford Times Building.

This year, the Steering Committee undertook a comprehensive review and update of the Commission’s bylaws for the first time since 2016. The bylaws are rules that supplement state law “to ensure the consistent and efficient operation of the Commission in fulfilling its mission.”²² Committee members sought to align the bylaws with current administrative and decision-making practices and to consider procedural changes that may be warranted going forward. Possible revisions include clarifying rules on proxy voting, authorizing the creation of working groups within advisory committees, and establishing procedures for notifying appointing authorities about member

¹⁶ Connecticut Network. “Connecticut Sentencing Commission January 9th Meeting.” (January 9, 2025). <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=24066>.

¹⁷ Connecticut Network. “Connecticut Sentencing Commission March 27th Meeting.” (March 27, 2025). <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=24596>.

¹⁸ Connecticut Network. “Connecticut Sentencing Commission June 26th Meeting.” (June 26, 2025). <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=25045>.

¹⁹ Connecticut Network. “Connecticut Sentencing Commission October 23rd Meeting.” (October 23, 2025). <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=25470>.

²⁰ Connecticut Network, *supra* note 3.

²¹ Connecticut Sentencing Commission. “The Connecticut Sentencing Commission Bylaws: Revised 12-8-2016.” <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Sentencing-Commission-Bylaws-12-8-2016-2.pdf>.

²² *Id.*

attendance and vacancies. The Committee will submit the proposed amendments to the full Commission for consideration in early 2026.

The Steering Committee is also overseeing several miscellaneous research and policy initiatives:

Statewide Sentencing Database

C.G.S. § 54-300, the Commission’s enabling statute, requires the body to “facilitate the development and maintenance of a state-wide sentencing database in collaboration with state and local agencies, using existing state databases or resources where appropriate.”²³ The Commission has taken two recent steps towards achieving this statutory mandate.

First, the Commission tapped Dr. Vaughn Crichlow, former Research Director at IMRP, and Sachin Pandya, Roger Sherman Professor of Law at UConn, to lead a study assessing the feasibility of creating a sentencing database. The project features 22 interviews with two key groups: (1) stakeholders in jurisdictions that already operate a sentencing database, to understand the challenges to building such a system and the strategies used to overcome them; and (2) criminal justice stakeholders in Connecticut, to determine how these strategies could be adapted to our system. The project, which will include actionable recommendations for the Commission, will be completed in early 2026.

Second, the Commission has begun discussions with the Connecticut Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Governing Board to access data from the Connecticut Information Sharing System (CISS). The Commission will collaborate with the CJIS Governing Board to establish a pilot portal for accessing sentencing data.



Study on the Experiences of Individuals Granted Parole under Public Act 15-84

Originating from a Commission proposal, Public Act 15-84 established new parole eligibility for individuals who committed a serious crime while under the age of 18.²⁴ In 2023, the Commission submitted a proposal to expand this eligibility to individuals who committed their crimes while under the age of 21. An amended version of this proposal was enacted as Public Act 23-169.²⁵ To date, at least 130 individuals have been granted parole under these laws.

²³ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 54-300, *supra* note 2.

²⁴ Conn. Public Act 15-84, “An Act Concerning Lengthy Sentences for Crimes Committed by a Child or Youth and the Sentencing of a Child or Youth Convicted of Certain Felony Offenses.” <https://cga.ct.gov/2015/ACT/pa/pdf/2015PA-00084-R00SB-00796-PA.pdf>

²⁵ Conn. Public Act 23-169, “An Act Concerning Parole Eligibility for an Individual Serving a Lengthy Sentence for a Crime Committed Before the Individual Reached the Age of Twenty-One and Criminal History Records Erasure.” <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2023/act/Pa/pdf/2023PA-00169-R00SB-00952-PA.PDF>



To evaluate the impact of these reforms, the Commission initiated a study to examine outcomes and experiences of individuals who were granted parole under Public Act 15-84. Led by Dr. Sukhmani Singh from the UConn School of Social Work, the researchers conducted 11 interviews with parolees to investigate their experiences with incarceration, the parole process, and reentry. This qualitative research was paired with an analysis of Board of Pardons and Paroles data on all parole recipients under Public Act 15-84 to examine their demographics and post-release outcomes (recidivism, employment, etc.).

The Commission is thrilled to collaborate with researchers from the UConn School of Social Work in its Study on the Experiences of Individuals Granted Parole under Public Act 15-84.

The research team will finalize the report and present its findings to the Commission at its February 2026 meeting. The Commission will also consider adopting the report at the meeting.

Study on Racial, Ethnic, Gender, and Socioeconomic Disparities in Pretrial and Sentencing Outcomes

Special Act 19-17 (see Appendix C) directed the Commission to “study potential disparities in pretrial and sentencing outcomes related to the racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic status of a criminal defendant.”²⁶ Dr. Stephen Ross, Professor in the UConn Economics Department, and Miguel de Figueroa, Professor at the UConn School of Law, who were selected to lead the study, released an interim report in January 2020, outlining the study’s planned scope, research methods, and schedule.²⁷ The original statutory deadline was January 1, 2021, but complications obtaining data prevented this deadline from being met.

In 2025, researchers signed a memorandum of understanding with the Judicial Branch to access the requisite data to complete this analysis, spanning the years 2018-2023. A final report is expected in 2026.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AND SENTENCING COMMITTEE

The Commission created its Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee in 2022. Chaired by Michael Gailor, State’s Attorney, Middlesex J.D, and Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director, Division of Public Defender Services, the Committee brings together stakeholders from the Judicial Branch, Division of Criminal Justice, Division of Public Defender Services, Department of Correction, Board of Pardons and Paroles, advocacy organizations, and academia to investigate all

²⁶ Conn. Special Act 19-17, “An Act Concerning a Study of the Disparities in Pretrial and Sentencing Outcomes of Criminal Defendants.” <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/ACT/sa/pdf/2019SA-00017-R00SB-01008-SA.pdf>.

²⁷ Connecticut Sentencing Commission. “2020 Interim Report: A Study of the Disparities in Pretrial and Sentencing Outcomes of Criminal Defendants.” (January 2020). <https://ctsencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Interim-Report-in-Disparities-in-Pretrial-Justice-and-Sentencing-Outcomes-in-Connecticut.pdf>.

facets of sentencing policy. The Committee met three times in 2025: October 16, November 3, and November 18. The meetings were held remotely via Zoom.

The Committee is engaged in a wide variety of policy topics:

Hate Crime Statutes Report

In March 2023, the Governor’s Hate Crimes Advisory Council requested (see Appendix D) the Commission “undertake a thorough review of the criminal statutes on hate crimes.”²⁸ In reviewing the statutes, the Commission was to answer four overarching questions:

1. Are the statutes constitutional under federal law?
2. Are they coherent?
3. Are they consistent with one another?
4. Are they comprehensive and do they cover the majority of types of hate crimes?²⁹



Deborah Del Prete Sullivan presented the findings from the Hate Crime Statutes Report.

To complete this analysis, Commission staff catalogued hate crime statutes in Connecticut, researched statutes in other jurisdictions, and reviewed federal and state case law. Staff concluded this analysis and developed an initial draft in early 2025.

Upon receiving the draft, the Committee began to revise the report and work through areas of disagreement, led by Co-Chairs Deborah Del Prete Sullivan and Michael Gailor. Members contributed comments and suggested edits to strengthen the report and achieve a collaborative, consensus-driven final product. Attorney Sullivan presented the report’s key findings and recommendations at the October 23 full Commission meeting.³⁰ At its November 18 meeting, the Committee unanimously voted to forward the report to the full Commission, which subsequently approved it and transmitted it to the Hate Crimes Advisory Council on December 10. The full report can be found [here](#).

Pretrial Release and Detention

The Committee continued to study pretrial release and detention in 2025, seeking to better understand Connecticut’s system and explore potential reforms to maximize liberty, fairness, and community safety.

Quantitative

The Committee is updating and expanding on the data analysis from the Commission’s 2017 report “Pretrial Release and Detention in Connecticut.”³¹ Directed by Sachin Pandya, Roger Sherman

²⁸ Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council. [Letter from the Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission]. <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/CT-Hate-Crimes-Advisory-Council.pdf>

²⁹ Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council. “2023 Annual Report.” (October 3, 2023). <https://portal.ct.gov/hatecrimes/-/media/hatecrimes/2023-hcac-annual-report---03oct2023.pdf?rev=d45d1951f39544bda8388fde57377fd1&hash=ED80FB0BCD27667CC04F9C68FEBB00AA>.

³⁰ Del Prete Sullivan, Deborah. “Hate Crime Statutes Report.” PowerPoint presented to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. (October 23, 2025). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Hate-Crimes-Report-Presentation-10.23.pdf>

³¹ Connecticut Sentencing Commission. “Report to the Governor and General Assembly on Pretrial Release and Detention in Connecticut.” (February 2017). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Pretrial-Release-and-Detention-in-CT-2.14.2017.pdf>

Professor of Law at UConn, Dr. Vaughn Crichlow, former Research Director at IMRP, and Matthew Hono, Research Technician at IMRP, the study will illuminate pretrial decision making from booking at a police department through pretrial stay in a Department of Correction facility. Specifically, it will report characteristics of defendants released or detained by race/ethnicity, gender, mechanism, charge, risk score, bail status, and bond amount; calculate key pretrial metrics including rates of release, court appearance, and new arrest; and provide a snapshot of the pretrial detained population.

The research team signed a memorandum of understanding with the Judicial Branch to obtain the data needed to conduct this study. The MOU was executed, and the data was provided to researchers, in March 2025.

Pandya presented at the Commission meeting on October 23, highlighting preliminary findings from the report, outlining data limitations, and soliciting additional research questions from Commission members.³² The report will be finalized in 2026.

Qualitative

At the Commission meeting on September 28, 2023, State Representative Steven Stafstrom, House Co-Chair of the Judiciary Committee, asked the body to develop a potential framework for an intentional pretrial system in Connecticut.³³ In response, the Commission launched a comparative analysis of jurisdictions that have transitioned from a means-based to an intentional, risk-based system of pretrial release and detention. The report traces the evolution of intentional pretrial decision making, compares pretrial systems in jurisdictions that have undertaken reforms, and describes critical components of such reform systems.



Representative Steven Stafstrom addresses the Commission.

Initially led by former New Jersey Superior Court Judge Martin Cronin, who previously served on a commission to study pretrial issues in the state, the project is currently spearheaded by Rich Sparaco, Interim Executive Director, and Christian Isidoro, a Justice David Borden Fellow. An initial draft was completed in July 2025, and a final draft is expected in 2026.

Pretrial Working Group

At its October 15 meeting, the Steering Committee voted to create a pretrial working group under the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee. The working group has met nine times as an entity of the Commission: October 9, October 24, October 31, November 7, November 14, November 21, December 5, December 12, and December 19. Chaired by Daniel Karpowitz, undersecretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning, the group facilitates conversations between

³² Connecticut Network, *supra* note 19.

³³ Connecticut Network. "Connecticut Sentencing Commission September Meeting." (September 28, 2023). <https://ctn.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=22169>.

stakeholders from the General Assembly, Judicial Branch, Division of Criminal Justice, Division of Public Defender Services, Department of Correction, and Criminal Justice Information System, as well as other agencies and advocacy groups. Its duties include overseeing the Commission’s pretrial research efforts, leveraging data to inform conversations about the pretrial system, identifying current shortcomings in the availability of pretrial data, determining the effect of previous reforms, and exploring ways to more effectively distribute resources. The group will produce a written summary of its findings and ongoing work for the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee in 2026.

Policy Proposals

At the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee meeting on August 13, 2024, Inspector General, and former Commission Chair, Robert Devlin proposed a statutory change that would allow a bail commissioner to revisit the conditions of release set by a judge on a bench warrant for low-level, nonviolent defendants. The Commission considered recommending this change to the General Assembly in its 2025 legislative proposals, but the Judicial Branch decided to adopt the change administratively. The change took effect in March 2025, with the addition of a new option to the bench warrant form allowing judges to authorize bail commissioners to review bonds set at \$10,000 or less (see Appendix I).³⁴

Sentencing Outcomes in Domestic Violence Homicide Cases

In 2024, State Representatives Raghib Allie-Brennan and Steve Stafstrom requested the Commission study sentencing outcomes in cases of domestic violence homicide (see Appendix F). The corresponding letter asked the study to address “the method and means of murder, prior protective orders, prior history of abuse, race and gender of the victim and defendant, age of the victims and defendants, the criminal charges, any plea bargains, the prosecution process, the sentence and potential appeal, and the survivor or their family's satisfaction.”³⁵



Representative Raghib Allie-Brennan explains his research request to the Commission.

The Commission continued work on this initiative in 2025 under the direction of Dr. Lydia Wileden, Assistant Research Professor at IMRP. The project includes (1) a comparative legal component, examining domestic violence statutory frameworks in Connecticut and other states; and (2) a quantitative component, analyzing Connecticut Family Violence Homicide Reports from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and statewide murder and manslaughter data from the Judicial Branch. Dr. Wileden presented on the study’s progress and initial findings at

³⁴ State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Superior Court, *supra* note 4.

³⁵ Allie-Brennan, Raghib and Steven Stafstrom. [Letter from Representatives Raghib Allie-Brennan and Steven Stafstrom to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission]. (April 10, 2024). <https://ctsencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Rep-Stafstrom-and-Rep-AllieBrennans-letter-to-the-Sentencing-Commission.pdf>.

the Commission meeting on June 26, 2025.³⁶ The Commission will respond to the request with a final report in 2026.



Representative Jillian Gilchrest, who asked the Commission to study human trafficking statutes in Connecticut.

Human Trafficking Statutes

On behalf of the Trafficking in Persons Council, Representative Jillian Gilchrest asked (see Appendix E) the Commission to “review the similarities and differences between federal and state law as it pertains to the definition of human trafficking and determine the feasibility of Connecticut’s definition aligning with federal law.”³⁷ Commission staff continued this research in 2025, tracking differences between the state and federal statutes and surveying trafficking statutes in other states to reveal gaps in Connecticut law. Michael Gailor, Co-Chair of the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee, has taken the lead on the project. The report is projected to conclude in 2026.

Use of Police Chokeholds

In addition to the bail proposal, as described above, Inspector General Robert Devlin also suggested amending C.G.S. § 53a-22 to close a loophole in the police chokehold statute at the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee meeting on August 13, 2024. The statutory loophole, which Inspector General Devlin discovered in the course of his work, permits the use of a chokehold in cases of self-defense, but not in defense of a third person. The Commission voted without opposition at its meeting on November 14, 2024, to propose language to the General Assembly that would close this loophole.³⁸ The proposal was enacted as section 9 of Public Act 25-29 (see Appendix H).³⁹

MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

In 2019, State Senator Catherine Osten asked the Commission to: (1) determine the number of chronically mentally ill individuals in Connecticut prisons; (2) ascertain whether this population serves longer sentences, and if so, why; and (3) evaluate whether this population has equal access to programming while incarcerated (see Appendix B).⁴⁰ This request prompted the creation of the Mental Health Committee, which held its inaugural meeting on October 20, 2019. The Committee oversaw the development of two initial reports to answer Senator Osten’s key



Senator Cathy Osten, a supporter of the Commission’s research on mental health.

³⁶ Wileden, Lydia. “Update on Domestic Violence Homicide Study.” PowerPoint presented to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. (June 26, 2025). https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CTSC_DVHPresentation_2025_06_26.pdf.

³⁷ Gilchrist, Jillian, and Steven Hernández. [Letter from the Trafficking in Persons Council to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission]. (May 23, 2022).

³⁸ Connecticut Network. “Connecticut Sentencing Commission November 14th Meeting.” (November 14, 2024). <https://ctn.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=23790>.

³⁹ Conn. Public Act 25-29, *supra* note 9.

⁴⁰ Osten, Cathy. [Letter from Senator Cathy Osten to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission]. (September 4, 2019). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Osten.Chronically-Mentally-Ill-Study.pdf>.

research questions: a 2020 memorandum on mental health care need classifications in Connecticut’s incarcerated population⁴¹ and a 2023 report on mental health disorders in Connecticut’s incarcerated population.⁴²

Recognizing the importance of this work and the need for further research, the General Assembly appropriated \$500,000 in FY22 for the Commission “to support a study of inmate mental health.”⁴³ This funding enabled the Commission to launch several related studies exploring other aspects of the intersection between mental health and the criminal justice system.

The Mental Health Committee made additional progress on these research projects in 2025. Chaired by Jennifer Zito, defense attorney, and Judge Gerald Harmon, Presiding Part-A Criminal Judge, Judicial District of New Haven, whose term on the Commission expired in 2025, the Committee has representation from DMHAS, the Judicial Branch, OPM, and the Division of Public Defender Services. The Committee met five times in 2025: February 25, April 29, July 14, September 15, and October 14. The meetings were held remotely via Zoom.

Competency to Stand Trial in Connecticut

In 2025, the Commission completed its comprehensive overview of the competency to stand trial system in Connecticut. The final report reviews best practices identified in academic literature; describes the evaluation and restoration process; analyzes data from DMHAS and the Judicial Branch on evaluation outcomes, charge severity, and restoration efficacy; and offers recommendations for policymakers to strengthen the system. Jessica Waggoner, Director of DMHAS Forensic Services, and Dr. Reena Kapoor, former Director of DMHAS Forensic Services, presented the findings from the report at the Commission meeting on December 10.⁴⁴ At the meeting, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the report for publication. The full report can be found [here](#).



Jessica Waggoner (top) and Dr. Reena Kapoor (bottom) discuss the findings of the Competency to Stand Trial Report at a Commission meeting.

⁴¹ Connecticut Sentencing Commission. “Memorandum on Mental Health Care Need Classifications in Connecticut’s Incarcerated Population.” (July 7, 2020). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Mental-Health-Memo.pdf>.

⁴² Connecticut Sentencing Commission. “Mental Health Disorders in Connecticut’s Incarcerated Population.” (January 2023). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Mental-Health-Disorders-in-Connecticuts-Incarcerated-Population-2.pdf>.

⁴³ Conn. Public Act 22-118, “An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023, Concerning Provisions Related to Revenue, School Construction and Other Items to Implement the State Budget and Authorizing and Adjusting Bonds of the State.” <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2022/act/pa/pdf/2022PA-00118-R00HB-05506-PA.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Waggoner, Jessica, and Reena Kapoor. “CST Report – Overview.” PowerPoint presented to the Connecticut Sentencing Commission. (December 10, 2025). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Updated-Competency-powerpoint-for-Sentencing-Commission.pptx-Read-Only.pdf>.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Access for Individuals Reentering the Community



In 2023, the Commission partnered with Dr. Benjamin Howell and Dr. Kathryn Thomas from the Yale SEICHE Center for Health and Justice to study the experiences of individuals seeking mental health and substance abuse treatment after release from prison or while on community supervision. The mixed methods study contains: (1) a qualitative component interviewing over 25 justice-impacted individuals to identify factors affecting treatment access and quality; and (2) a quantitative component merging data from various agencies to create an individual-level, longitudinal dataset that tracks use of mental health and addiction treatment, health outcomes, and contact with the justice system.⁴⁵

Dr. Howell and Dr. Thomas provided regular updates to the Mental Health Committee throughout the year. The research team has completed the interview component and qualitative analysis, but the quantitative analysis remains on hold pending access to the Office of Policy and Management's DataLinkCT (formerly P20WIN) database. Researchers are hopeful that this issue will be resolved soon and that the full report can be completed in 2026.

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System

Section 15 of Public Act 23-137 requires the Commission to study the experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, in the criminal justice system (see Appendix G). The study must include “(1) rates of incarceration of such persons compared to the overall population of such persons in the state, (2) the advisability of behavioral assessments of such persons before sentencing and costs of such assessments, and (3) best practices of other states concerning such persons.” The study is due to the General Assembly by December 31, 2025.⁴⁶

The Commission is collaborating with Rachel Mirsky and Gina Teixeira, Staff Attorneys at Disability Rights Connecticut, to complete this project. Deborah Dorfman was an early contributor to the project but has since left her role as Executive Director of Disability Rights Connecticut. The team has conducted legal research, examined best practices in other jurisdictions, analyzed data from multiple state agencies, and interviewed a broad range of stakeholders from both the criminal justice and healthcare systems.



In January 2025, the team synthesized its early findings in a memorandum on the prevalence of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the criminal justice system.⁴⁷ They expanded on these

⁴⁵ Connecticut Sentencing Commission and Yale SEICHE Center. “Evaluation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Use in Individuals Following Release from Incarceration or on Community Supervision, Connecticut, 2018-2022: Draft Scope and Proposal for Research Study.” (February 27, 2023). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2.27.23-SEICHE-IMRP-CSC-mental-health-proposal-DRAFT.pdf>

⁴⁶ Conn. Public Act 23-137, *supra* note 6.

⁴⁷ Dorfman, Deborah. “Memorandum Regarding Prevalence of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in the Criminal Justice System.” (January 30, 2025). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Memo-to-Sentencing-Commission-re-Proposed-Diversion-for-People-with-IDD-1-30-2025.pdf>

preliminary themes and observations during a detailed presentation at the Mental Health Committee meeting on July 14.⁴⁸ In addition to this comprehensive presentation, the researchers have regularly provided brief updates at both the Mental Health Committee and full Commission meetings.

This research prompted the development of a legislative proposal in 2025. Building on an unsuccessful proposal from the previous session, the Commission recommended an expansion of eligibility for the pretrial Supervised Diversionary Program, which redirects individuals who have been accused of non-serious crimes away from incarceration, to incorporate individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with autism.⁴⁹ The Judiciary Committee unanimously endorsed the proposal as section 9 of House Bill 7259,⁵⁰ but the provision was removed from the bill before its final passage.⁵¹

Behavioral Health Diversionary Program Resource

Commission staff continued work in 2025 on a project to catalogue and present data on behavioral health diversionary programs in Connecticut. The resource will provide a detailed description of each program, report usage data for select programs, discuss the practices of other states, and outline the roles of judges and prosecutors in diverting accused individuals. At the Mental Health Committee meeting on February 25, Matthew Hono, Research Technician at IMRP, presented the study's goals and scope, and solicited suggestions for further inquiry.⁵² The project is slated for completion in 2026.

⁴⁸ Mirsky, Rachel. "Evolution of CT's Potential IDD/ASD Diversionary Program: Themes and Observations at a Glance." PowerPoint presented to the Mental Health Committee. (July 14, 2025). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Evolution-of-CTs-IDD-ASD-Diversionary-Program-Trends-and-Observations-At-a-Glance.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Connecticut Sentencing Commission. "An Act Concerning Supervised Diversionary Program." <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/An-Act-Concerning-Supervised-Diversionary-Program.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Conn. House Bill 7259, *supra* note 7.

⁵¹ Connecticut General Assembly. "Bill Status: Substitute for Raised H.B. No. 7259." (2025). https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&which_year=2025&bill_num=7259.

⁵² Hono, Matthew. "CT Sentencing Commission: Online Behavioral Health Diversionary Resource." PowerPoint presented to the Mental Health Committee. (February 25, 2025). <https://ctsentencingcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Behavioral-Health-Diversionary-Resource--1-1.pdf>.

IV. 2025 Legislative Session

In 2025, the Sentencing Commission submitted two proposals to the Judiciary Committee:



1. [An Act Concerning Use of Police Chokeholds](#)

This recommendation closed a loophole in C.G.S. § 53a-22⁵³ by permitting a police officer to use a chokehold in defense of a third person, rather than only in self-defense. Inspector General Robert Devlin brought the suggested proposal to the Commission after discovering the statutory omission in the course of his work. The proposed change advanced through the Judiciary Committee unanimously as section 8 of House Bill 7259.⁵⁴ It was

subsequently approved by the General Assembly and signed into law as section 9 of Public Act 25-29 (see Appendix H).⁵⁵

2. [An Act Concerning Supervised Diversionary Program](#)

This recommendation would expand eligibility for the pretrial Supervised Diversionary Program to individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The existing program, codified in C.G.S. § 54-56,⁵⁶ provides an alternative to incarceration for veterans or individuals with psychiatric disabilities who are accused of a non-serious crime or motor vehicle violation that may carry a term of imprisonment. The proposed changes would extend eligibility for the program to individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The proposal was approved unanimously by the Judiciary Committee as section 9 of House Bill 7259.⁵⁷ However, it was removed from the bill prior to its ultimate passage due to fiscal and administrative concerns.⁵⁸ The Commission has continued to research this issue as part of its study on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system and may explore future proposals accordingly.



⁵³ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 53a-22. Use of physical force in making arrest or preventing escape.

https://www.cga.ct.gov/2025/pub/chap_951.htm#sec_53a-22.

⁵⁴ Conn. House Bill 7259, *supra* note 7.

⁵⁵ Conn. Public Act 25-29, *supra* note 9.

⁵⁶ Conn. Gen. Stat. § 54-56l. Pretrial supervised diversionary program for persons with psychiatric disabilities and veterans.

https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_960.htm#sec_54-56l.

⁵⁷ Conn. House Bill 7259, *supra* note 7.

⁵⁸ Connecticut General Assembly, *supra* note 51.

V. COMMISSION BUDGET

	FY25	FY26	Average
Staffing	\$404,077.60	\$434,024.94	\$419,051.27
Conferences	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Travel	\$30,500.00	\$10,000.00	\$20,250.00
Materials and Supplies	\$422.40	\$975.06	\$698.73
Total	\$445,000.00	\$445,000.00	\$445,000.00

The Commission is funded solely through state appropriations. Funds are appropriated to the Judicial Branch and distributed to the Commission in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between the Branch and the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy (IMRP). The expense-specific distribution of these funds is detailed above.

Two additional research initiatives – (1) a study of the experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system; and (2) a study of community mental health and addiction treatment use in individuals following release from incarceration or on community supervision – are supported by funds directly appropriated to the IMRP for the specific purpose of researching the intersection between mental health and the criminal justice system.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Connecticut General Statutes § 54-300. Sentencing Commission

APPENDIX B: Letter Requesting a Study on Mental Illness in Prison

APPENDIX C: Special Act 19-17

APPENDIX D: Letter Requesting a Review of CT Hate Crime Statutes

APPENDIX E: Letter Requesting a Study on CT Trafficking in Persons Statute

APPENDIX F: Letter Requesting a Study on CT Domestic Violence Murder

APPENDIX G: Public Act 23-137 § 15, IDD Study

APPENDIX H: Public Act 25-29 § 8, Use of a Chokehold by Police

APPENDIX I: Updated Bench Warrant Form

APPENDIX A

Sec. 54-300. Sentencing Commission

(a) There is established, within existing budgetary resources, a Connecticut Sentencing Commission which shall be within the Office of Policy and Management for administrative purposes only.

(b) The mission of the commission shall be to review the existing criminal sentencing structure in the state and any proposed changes thereto, including existing statutes, proposed criminal justice legislation and existing and proposed sentencing policies and practices and make recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly and appropriate criminal justice agencies.

(c) In fulfilling its mission, the commission shall recognize that: (1) The primary purpose of sentencing in the state is to enhance public safety while holding the offender accountable to the community, (2) sentencing should reflect the seriousness of the offense and be proportional to the harm to victims and the community, using the most appropriate sanctions available, including incarceration, community punishment and supervision, (3) sentencing should have as an overriding goal the reduction of criminal activity, the imposition of just punishment and the provision of meaningful and effective rehabilitation and reintegration of the offender, and (4) sentences should be fair, just and equitable while promoting respect for the law.

(d) The commission shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Eight persons appointed one each by: (A) The Governor, (B) the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, (C) the president pro tempore of the Senate, (D) the speaker of the House of Representatives, (E) the majority leader of the Senate, (F) the majority leader of the House of Representatives, (G) the minority leader of the Senate, and (H) the minority leader of the House of Representatives, all of whom shall serve for a term of four years;

(2) Two judges appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, one of whom shall serve for a term of one year and one of whom shall serve for a term of three years;

(3) One representative of the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who shall serve for a term of two years;

(4) The Commissioner of Correction, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(5) The Chief State's Attorney, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(6) The Chief Public Defender, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(7) One state's attorney appointed by the Chief State's Attorney, who shall serve for a term of three years;

(8) One member of the criminal defense bar appointed by the president of the Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, who shall serve for a term of three years;

(9) The Victim Advocate, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(10) The chairperson of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(11) The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(12) A municipal police chief appointed by the president of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, who shall serve for a term of two years;

(13) The Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office;

(14) The undersecretary of the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division within the Office of Policy and Management, who shall serve for a term coterminous with his or her term of office; and

(15) An active or retired judge appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who shall serve as chairperson of the commission and serve for a term of four years.

(e) The commission shall elect a vice-chairperson from among the membership. Appointed members of the commission shall serve for the term specified in subsection (d) of this section and may be reappointed. Any vacancy in the appointed membership of the commission shall be filled by the appointing authority for the unexpired portion of the term.

(f) The commission shall:

(1) Facilitate the development and maintenance of a state-wide sentencing database in collaboration with state and local agencies, using existing state databases or resources where appropriate;

(2) Evaluate existing sentencing statutes, policies and practices including conducting a cost-benefit analysis;

(3) Conduct sentencing trends analyses and studies and prepare offender profiles;

(4) Provide training regarding sentencing and related issues, policies and practices;

(5) Act as a sentencing policy resource for the state;

(6) Preserve judicial discretion and provide for individualized sentencing;

(7) Evaluate the impact of pretrial, sentencing diversion, incarceration and post-release supervision programs;

(8) Perform fiscal impact analyses on selected proposed criminal justice legislation; and

(9) Identify potential areas of sentencing disparity related to racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic status.

(g) Upon completing the development of the state-wide sentencing database pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (f) of this section, the commission shall review criminal justice legislation as requested and as resources allow.

(h) The commission shall make recommendations concerning criminal justice legislation, including proposed modifications thereto, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary which shall hold a hearing thereon.

(i) The commission shall have access to confidential information received by sentencing courts and the Board of Pardons and Paroles including, but not limited to, arrest data, criminal history records, medical records and other non-conviction information.

(j) The commission shall obtain full and complete information with respect to programs and other activities and operations of the state that relate to the criminal sentencing structure in the state.

(k) The commission may request any office, department, board, commission or other agency of the state or any political subdivision of the state to supply such records, information and assistance as may be necessary or appropriate in order for the commission to carry out its duties. Each officer or employee of such office, department, board, commission or other agency of the state or any political subdivision of the state is authorized and directed to cooperate with the commission and to furnish such records, information and assistance.

(l) The commission may accept, on behalf of the state, any grants of federal or private funds made available for any purposes consistent with the provisions of this section.

(m) Any records or information supplied to the commission that is confidential in accordance with any provision of the general statutes shall remain confidential while in the custody of the commission and shall not be disclosed. Any penalty for the disclosure of such records or information applicable to the officials, employees and authorized representatives of the office, department, board, commission or other agency of the state or any political subdivision of the state that supplied such records or information shall apply in the same manner and to the same extent to the members, staff and authorized representatives of the commission.

(n) The commission shall be deemed to be a criminal justice agency as defined in subsection (b) of section 54-142g.

(o) The commission shall meet at least once during each calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairperson deems necessary.

(p) Not later than January 15, 2012, and annually thereafter, the commission shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the Governor, the General Assembly and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

APPENDIX B

SENATOR CATHY OSTEN
Nineteenth District

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Toll-free 1-800-842-1420
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State of Connecticut
SENATE

Chair
Appropriations Committee

Vice Chair
Labor & Public Employees Committee
Public Safety & Security Committee

Member
Legislative Management Committee
Regulation Review Committee
Transportation Committee
Veterans' Affairs Committee

September 4, 2019

Honorable Robert J. Devlin, Jr.
Chair, Connecticut Sentencing Commission
185 Main Street, Room 212
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: Study concerning Inmates established as Chronically Mentally Ill

Dear Judge Devlin,

I am writing to respectfully request that the Connecticut Sentencing Commission undertake a study to provide data on the number of inmates in Connecticut prisons who are identified as chronically mentally ill, ascertain if this class of inmates is completing a longer portion of their sentences as compared to other inmates, and if so, the reasons why, and determine if this class of inmates accesses programs which allow for a smooth transition into the community at the same percentage rate as other inmates access such programs. To assist the Commission's efforts with this study, I am enclosing a copy of my Proposed Bill No. 760 from the 2019 regular legislative session for your reference.

Thank you for undertaking this important task. I look forward to your Commission's findings. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine A. Osten".

Catherine A. Osten
State Senator, 19th District

Enclosure



General Assembly

January Session, 2019

Proposed Bill No. 760

LCO No. 3153



Referred to Committee on JUDICIARY

Introduced by:
SEN. OSTEN, 19th Dist.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO PROVIDE AND ANALYZE DATA CONCERNING INMATES ESTABLISHED AS CHRONICALLY MENTALLY ILL.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 That the general statutes be amended to establish a task force to (1)
- 2 provide data on the number of inmates who are established as
- 3 chronically mentally ill, (2) ascertain if this class of inmates is
- 4 completing a longer portion of their sentences as compared to other
- 5 inmates, and if so, the reasons why, and (3) ascertain if this class of
- 6 inmates accesses programs which allow for a smooth transition into
- 7 the community at the same percentage rate as other inmates access
- 8 such programs.

Statement of Purpose:

To establish a task force to provide data on the number of inmates who are established as chronically mentally ill.

APPENDIX C



Senate Bill No. 1008

Special Act No. 19-17

AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE DISPARITIES IN PRETRIAL AND SENTENCING OUTCOMES OF CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Connecticut Sentencing Commission shall study potential disparities in pretrial and sentencing outcomes related to the racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic status of a criminal defendant. In furtherance of such study, said commission shall have access to: (1) All databases maintained in the state's criminal justice information system; (2) the Connecticut Information Sharing System; and (3) any state or local criminal or judicial databases that have not yet been integrated into the Connecticut Information Sharing System.

(b) Not later than January 1, 2020, said commission shall submit an interim report on the study, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary. Not later than January 1, 2021, said commission shall submit its final report on the study and any recommendations from the commission, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General

Senate Bill No. 1008

Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary and to the Governor.

Approved July 1, 2019

APPENDIX D



CONNECTICUT HATE CRIMES ADVISORY COUNCIL
<https://portal.ct.gov/hatecrimes>

Dear Alex,

On behalf of the Governor's Hate Crimes Advisory Council (Council or HCAC), we respectfully request the Connecticut State Sentencing Commission undertake a thorough review of the criminal statutes on hate crimes as further described in the HCAC's legislative priority below. We also request the commission investigate what standards other states are using with regard to hate crimes. Particularly, we are interested in knowing what the *mens rea* requirements are in such hate crimes statutes.

In addition, the Council requests the Connecticut State Sentencing Commission consider consulting with the Governor's Hate Crimes Advisory Council, community groups, or other organizations that may not be represented on the commission to complete this project thoroughly.

Members of the Council are happy to discuss this request with you or other members of the Connecticut State Sentencing Commission. This review by the commission would be in lieu of the HCAC seeking legislation on this matter.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Judge Douglas S. Lavine and Amy Lin Meyerson, Esq.
Co-chairs, Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council

cc:

Chief State's Attorney Patrick Griffin
Michael Bloom, Chair, HCAC Legislative Priorities Committee
Tom Scanlon, Deputy Director, Boards and Commissions, Governor's Office

**Connecticut Hate Crimes Advisory Council
Legislative Priority**

Convene A Working Group to Review Hate Crimes Statutes

Background

The HCAC found that one of the main impediments to law enforcement reporting and charging hate crimes is the ambiguous intent standard in the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). We, therefore, recommend that the Legislature, with advice from the Chief State's Attorney's Office, undertake a thorough review of the statutes on hate crimes to simplify and clarify the intent standard and other provisions in Connecticut's hate crime laws.

Recommendation

The HCAC strongly urges the Legislature to convene a working group, with advice from the Chief State's Attorney's Office, to undertake a thorough review of the criminal statutes on hate crimes and present revisions to such statutes to simplify and clarify the intent standard and other provisions in these statutes to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes within Connecticut.

Connecticut Data

The HCAC Hate Crimes and Reporting Subcommittee heard evidence from Connecticut law enforcement about ambiguities in the statutes that hinder reporting and investigation of hate crimes. The boundary between three particular adjacent categories is unclear: hate crimes as defined in statutes, crimes that have bias elements, but these are insufficient to classify them as hate crimes, and bias incidents that do not rise to the level of crimes. The public is usually not aware of the distinction between hate crimes and hate speech, nor informed of the fact that not all slurs, even when committed in the course of an offense, constitute hate crimes. Both law enforcement and public awareness would benefit from clearly distinguishing between statutory hate crimes, crimes with bias elements, and bias incidents that may be serious and are worthy of monitoring, but that do not constitute actual crimes.

Codifying the definitions of "Crimes with Bias Elements" and "Non-Criminal Bias Incidents" in POST-C policy provides agility in subsequent modification as circumstances evolve. This agility would not be present were the definitions to be codified in statute. In formulating these definitions, the Subcommittee draws from the experience of the Bias Crime Unit of the Seattle Police Department which has developed a sophisticated model of hate crimes reporting, investigation, and data analysis.ⁱ

Best practices in hate crimes reporting recommend "establishing a common, simple and comprehensive definition of hate crime."ⁱⁱ Currently, the opaque intent language of the CGS hinders police identification of hate crimes and may discourage a prosecutor from pursuing hate crimes charges. The subjective elements of bias crimes such as Intimidation in the First, Second, and Third Degree in CGS § 53a-181j-l are not fully consistent with federal hate crimes statutes.ⁱⁱⁱ This difference between Connecticut and federal hate crime statutes may potentially obstruct the reporting and prosecution of hate crimes. For instance, CGS § 53a-181j-k requires three subjective elements: malicious intent, "specific intent," and that the crime is motivated "in

whole or in substantial part” by bias or bigotry. This is confusing and also creates an unduly high evidentiary threshold of intent. Therefore, the removal of the words “maliciously,” “specific” and “substantial” in § 53a-181j-k, and “substantial” in § 53a-181l would establish a more reasonable general intent burden and bring Connecticut statutes into line with the federal intent standard of “motivated in whole or in part” by bias or bigotry. Clarifying the intent language is necessary to achieve consistency with and across federal and Connecticut hate crime laws.

ⁱ Bias Crime Unit, SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT (last accessed July 13, 2022) <https://www.seattle.gov/police/information-and-data/bias-crime-unit>.

ⁱⁱ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Hate Crimes Data-Collection and Monitoring Mechanisms: A Practical Guide* (2014), at 7.

ⁱⁱⁱ See 18 U.S.C.A. § 249 (federal hate crime acts language pertaining to *mens rea* differs significantly from that of Connecticut statute); see also *Hate Crimes, Defining a Hate Crime*, FBI, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes> (FBI defines hate crime as needing only be “motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias”).

APPENDIX E



May 23, 2022

Connecticut Sentencing Commission
University of Connecticut
10 Prospect St.
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Chair Pavia,

The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Council is chaired and convened by the Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors pursuant to C.G.S 46a-170. The TIP Council consults with government and non-governmental organizations (both state and federal) to develop recommendations to strengthen State and local efforts to prevent trafficking, protect and assist victims, prosecute traffickers, and provide updates and progress reports on trafficking in Connecticut. The TIP Council reports annually to the Connecticut General Assembly.

In our most recent 2020/2021 Report, the Council made the following recommendation:

- Recommend the Connecticut Sentencing Commission study the feasibility of revising Sec. 53a-192a, Trafficking in persons to align with federal law.

We respectfully request that the Connecticut Sentencing Commission review the similarities and differences between federal and state law as it pertains to the definition of human trafficking and determine the feasibility of Connecticut's definition aligning with federal law.

I have included the current definitions below for your edification. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss further. I appreciate you considering our request.

Sincerely,

Steven Hernández, Esq.
Executive Director

Jillian Gilchrest, State Representative
Chair, Trafficking in Persons Council

165 Capitol Avenue, Suite G-126, Hartford, CT 06106

APPENDIX F



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

April 10th, 2024

Dear Connecticut Sentencing Commission,

We respectfully ask that the Connecticut Sentencing Commission create a subcommittee to study sentencing and outcomes for domestic and family violence murder. We ask that the subcommittee consider but not limit themselves to: the method and means of murder, prior protective orders, prior history of abuse, race and gender of the victim and defendant, age of the victims and defendants, the criminal charges, any plea bargains, the prosecution process, the sentence and potential appeal, and the survivor or their family's satisfaction.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Stafstrom'.

Representative Steve Stafstrom
129th District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raghieb'.

Representative Raghieb Allie-Brennan
2nd District

APPENDIX G

Sec. 15. (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) The Connecticut Sentencing Commission, established pursuant to section 54-300 of the general statutes, shall study the experience of persons with an intellectual disability or other developmental disabilities, including, but not limited to, autism spectrum disorder, who are involved in the criminal justice system. Such study shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) rates of incarceration of such persons compared to the overall population of such persons in the state, (2) the advisability of behavioral assessments of such persons before sentencing and costs of such assessments, and (3) best practices of other states concerning such persons.

(b) In furtherance of its duties, the commission shall have access to: (1) Each database in the state-wide information technology system designed and implemented pursuant to section 54-142s of the general statutes; (2) any offender-based tracking system, as defined in section 54-142q of the general statutes, that has not been integrated into the state-wide information technology system; and (3) any other state or local criminal or judicial database that has not been integrated into the state-wide information technology system.

(c) The commission shall report the results of the study, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, not later than December 31, 2025, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services,

Public Act No. 23-137

15 of 92

Substitute House Bill No. 5001

public health and the judiciary. The report shall include the commission's recommendations for sentencing considerations for such persons.

APPENDIX H

Sec. 9. Subsection (d) of section 53a-22 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

Public Act No. 25-29

13 of 14

Substitute House Bill No. 7259

(d) A peace officer or an authorized official of the Department of Correction or the Board of Pardons and Paroles is justified in using a chokehold or other method of restraint applied to the neck area or that otherwise impedes the ability to breathe or restricts blood circulation to the brain of another person for the purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section only when he or she reasonably believes such use to be necessary to defend himself or herself or a third person from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force.

APPENDIX I

PRAWN ARREST WARRANT AND APPLICATION

JD-CR-67_PRAWN Rev. 3-25
C.G.S. §§ 54-1h, 54-2a, 54-63d, 54-65a; P.B. 38-21

NOTICE: This is a printout of data from PRAWN's central computer system. Pursuant to C.G.S. § 54-2a(e), any person may be arrested if a warrant exists for them in PRAWN. Upon arrest, you must give the arrestee a copy of the warrant. The names in the signature blocks are the names that appear on the original warrant.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH
SUPERIOR COURT
www.jud.ct.gov



Docket number	U.A.R./Summons/Ticket number	G.A.	Held at	Date warrant ordered		
Name of accused		Date of birth	Race	Sex	Date of original arrest	P.D. case number
Last known address of accused			Arresting agency name and code			

The undersigned, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. The accused was charged with the following offense(s):

Statute	Description	Class	Type

2. The accused was directed to appear in the court listed above for proceedings in said case.

3. The accused failed to appear on _____ when legally called according to the terms of their bail bond or promise to appear.

4. The court ordered that a warrant be issued for the re-arrest of the accused for failure to appear and set the following conditions:

Amount of bond
Type of bond

5. As a result of paragraph #4 above, the accused, in addition to the underlying offenses set forth in paragraph #1 above, is now charged with an additional count of: _____

Signed (Affiant)	Date signed	Subscribed and sworn to before me on (Date)	Signed (Judge, Commissioner of the Superior Court)
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Application

Based upon the affidavit above, the undersigned prosecuting authority asks the court to issue a warrant for the re-arrest of the accused.

Signed (Deputy Assistant State's Attorney)	Name of Prosecutor (Print)	Date signed
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Finding and Warrant

The undersigned considered this affidavit and application and finds that there is probable cause that an offense has been committed and that the accused committed it and, therefore, that probable cause exists to issue a warrant for the re-arrest of the accused named above.

If bond is set in an amount of \$10,000 or less, the court shall enter one of the orders below: (Select one)

- The undersigned **authorizes** any Bail Commissioner or IAR Specialist to review and, if appropriate, reduce the amount of the above bond or to release the arrestee on a promise to appear, pursuant to General Statutes § 54-63d. This authority is subject to any prosecutor's authority to delay any such modification until the arrestee is presented in court pursuant to General Statutes § 54-63d(d).
- The undersigned **does not authorize** a Bail Commissioner or IAR Specialist to modify the terms of the above court-set bond.

To: Any proper officer of the State of Connecticut

By authority of the State of Connecticut, you are hereby commanded to arrest the body of the accused named above and execute this warrant according to law.

Signed (A Judge of the Superior Court)	Name of Judge (Print)	Date signed
--	-----------------------	-------------

Return on Re-Arrest Warrant

State of Connecticut, county of _____ ss. _____	Date of service	
Under the authority of this warrant, I arrested the body of the accused named above and read the same in the hearing of the accused; and the accused was released pursuant to the court ordered conditions or is here in court for examination.		
Attest (Officer's signature and title, if applicable)	Shield number	Department

p. ____ of ____