

CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Steering Committee

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

1:00 – 3:00 PM

Hartford Times Building, Room 216

Members: Judge David Gold (Commission Chair), John Santa (Commission Vice Chair), Bill Dyson, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Jennifer Zito, Michael Gailor, John DelBarba (on behalf of John Day)

Staff: Rich Sparaco, Matthew Hono, Tommy Dowd, Andrew Clark, Mike Cronin, Patrick Riley, Lydia Wileden, Ken Barone

Guests: Bevin Salmon

MINUTES

I. MEETING CONVENED

- Judge David Gold convened the meeting at 1:08 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 1.21.2026 & 3.18.2026 MEETINGS

- The minutes from the 1.21.2026 & 3.18.2026 meetings were approved.
 - Deborah Del Prete Sullivan abstained because she was not in attendance at either meeting.

III. FORMALIZE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- Rich Sparaco introduced this agenda item.
 - Pursuant to the Commission's bylaws, the Steering Committee needs to approve official membership lists for each advisory committee.
 - Sparaco briefly reviewed the proposed membership lists for the Mental Health and Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committees, which were approved by each respective committee.
 - Sullivan noted an imbalance between members with a prosecutorial background and those with a defense background on the lists.
 - Jennifer Zito asked why the Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee had four members from CSSD.

- Judge Gold reported that these four members have distinct roles within CSSD.
- The Committee unanimously approved the two membership lists.

IV. COMMITTEE AND PROJECT UPDATES

a. Criminal Procedure and Sentencing

- Deborah Del Prete Sullivan provided an update.
 - The Criminal Procedure and Sentencing Committee met on May 11, where it discussed new and ongoing research initiatives.
 - The Committee will oversee new studies on court processing efficiencies and hate crime penalties.
 - 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.
- Sparaco briefly described the two new studies.
 - Hate Crimes
 - Sparaco is meeting with Michael Bloom from DESPP next week. He also reported that the Commission may create a Hate Crime Working Group to oversee the study.
 - Sullivan emphasized that Public Act 26-77 sets forth minimum required elements, but that the study may expand beyond these.

i. Pretrial Working Group

- Rich Sparaco provided an update.
 - The group was considering whether to schedule an in-person meeting in June, but now likely will not meet in-person until September. The group may convene virtually in the summer.
 - Commission staff are currently exploring differences between the pretrial systems in Connecticut and Massachusetts, as well as the implications of a recent California Supreme Court decision.
 - Staff are also preparing a presentation on pretrial research for the National Association of Sentencing Commissions Annual Conference, though planning has been complicated by Matthew Hono's departure.

- The Commission is slated to release two pretrial reports in September.
- Following discussion, the Committee agreed to pause the working group for the summer and reconvene in September.

b. Mental Health

- Zito provided an update.
 - The Mental Health Committee met on May 4 and May 19 to continue its discussions regarding the I/DD diversionary program recommendations.
 - The Committee discussed concerns around excludable offenses, multiple use, the presumption of outpatient competency restoration for individuals with I/DD, and new requirements for data collection.
 - Upon encouragement from Senator Cathy Osten, the Committee voted to resubmit the recommendations to the Commission as originally drafted with a summary of the Committee's discussions since the last full Commission meeting.
 - Zito is sending related materials for DCJ to consider.
 - Additionally, the Committee is continuing to oversee two additional research initiatives: (1) a study on the experiences of individuals seeking mental health and substance abuse treatment after release from prison or while on community supervision; and (2) a study cataloging and presenting data on behavioral health diversionary programs in Connecticut.
- Zito reported that she cannot attend the Commission meeting on June 17.
 - The Committee discussed whether to reschedule the meeting in light of plans for Zito to present the I/DD recommendations.
 - The Committee decided to keep the meeting as scheduled. Zito will ask Judge Courtney Chaplin to present the recommendations and will designate a proxy to attend in her place.

c. Other reports

- i. Sentencing Database Study – June 17
 - Sparaco provided an update.

- Sachin Pandya will present findings from the sentencing database study on June 17, with a final report to follow in the summer.

ii. Other

- Sullivan notified members that the Commission may receive a request to study (1) DUI laws and (2) procedures regarding jail credit.

V. 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

- Sparaco reviewed the 2025 Annual Report.
- The Committee unanimously agreed to forward the report to the full Commission.
 - Judge Gold abstained because he was not a Commission member in 2025.

VI. 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

a. New Hate Crimes Study

- This agenda item was discussed above.

b. Senate Bill 503

- Sparaco provided an update.
 - Senate Bill 503 would have (1) expanded juvenile parole eligibility to all individuals who committed their crimes under age 21 by removing a cutoff date created in Public Act 23-169 and (2) raised the age for juvenile parole eligibility to all individuals who committed their crimes under age 26.
 - SB 503 passed the Senate but did not receive a vote in the House.
 - Sparaco asked members whether the Commission should take a position on future iterations of this bill.
 - Sullivan suggested that the Commission could support removing the cutoff date.
 - Zito said that the Commission could help educate policy makers on the issue.
 - Bill Dyson stressed that the Commission should develop its strategy in advance of the legislative session.
 - The full Commission will discuss this issue in September.

VII. UPCOMING SCHEDULE

- a. Full Commission meeting on June 17
 - Sparaco provided an overview of the upcoming Commission meeting.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Potential Annual Symposium
 - Rich Sparaco introduced the topic.
 - In previous years, the Commission held an annual symposium to discuss one major criminal justice topic.
 - Sparaco asked whether the Commission should host a symposium this fall, and if so, what topics it should address.
 - Sparaco also raised alternatives to a symposium, such as a public hearing.
 - Zito noted that events such as a symposium could help raise the Commission's profile and suggested I/DD as a potential topic.
 - Judge Gold expressed concern that organizing a symposium would add to the Commission's already heavy workload and busy schedule.
- b. National Association of Sentencing Commissions Annual Conference – August 12-14
 - Dr. Lydia Wileden discussed the conference and encouraged Committee members to attend.
- c. Update on Executive Director Search Process
 - Ken Barone provided an update.
- d. Any further amendments to Commission bylaws
 - No further changes were proposed.
 - The Commission will consider the proposed bylaw amendments at its next meeting.
- e. Other business
 - Judge Gold adjourned the meeting at 2:57 PM.
 - The next full Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 17, at 1PM, in Room 1B of the Legislative Office Building.
 - The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 19, at 1PM.