



General Assembly

January Session, 2001

**Committee Bill No. 503**

LCO No. 4703

Referred to Committee on Public Safety

Introduced by:  
(PS)

***AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PRISONER FATALITY REVIEW PANEL.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (a) (1) There is established a prisoner fatality  
2 review panel composed of the following members or their designees:  
3 The Commissioner of Public Safety; the Commissioner of Correction;  
4 the Chief State's Attorney; the Chief Public Defender; the Chief  
5 Medical Examiner; the executive director of the Commission on  
6 Human Rights and Opportunities; the executive director of the African  
7 American Affairs Commission, the executive director of the Latino and  
8 Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and the President of the Connecticut  
9 Police Chiefs Association. The panel shall also consist of three persons  
10 with background and experience in medicolegal investigations, one of  
11 whom shall be appointed by the Governor, one by the president pro  
12 tempore of the Senate and one by the speaker of the House of  
13 Representatives, and two persons representing civic or religious  
14 leaders, one of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of the  
15 Senate and one of whom shall be appointed by the minority leader of  
16 the House of Representatives. The chairpersons and ranking members  
17 of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having

18 cognizance of matters relating to public safety and the chairpersons  
19 and ranking members of the joint standing committee of the General  
20 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary shall  
21 serve ex officio with full voting rights. A majority of the panel may  
22 select not more than three additional temporary members with  
23 particular expertise or interest to serve on the review of a specific  
24 fatality. Such temporary members shall have the same duties and  
25 powers as the permanent members of the panel.

26 (2) The permanent members of the panel shall annually elect one of  
27 its members as chairperson and one as vice chairperson. Members of  
28 the panel shall receive no compensation but shall be reimbursed for  
29 their actual expenses incurred in service on the panel. The panel shall  
30 meet at least once each year and more often as its duties require, upon  
31 the call of the chairperson and vice chairperson. The panel shall also  
32 meet upon the request of any five members. The Commission on  
33 Human Rights and Opportunities shall, within available  
34 appropriations, provide staff resources to the panel. The panel shall, to  
35 the greatest extent possible, reflect the ethnic, cultural and geographic  
36 diversity of the state.

37 (b) The panel shall review the circumstances of the death, or the  
38 illness or injury that results in the death, of any person who was, at the  
39 time of such death, illness or injury, in the custody and care of a  
40 municipal police department, the Division of State Police within the  
41 Department of Public Safety, or the Department of Correction. The  
42 panel shall consider issues arising from such death including, but not  
43 limited to, (1) security systems in place for the safety of persons in  
44 custody, (2) preincarceration screening, (3) autopsy procedures, (4) the  
45 accuracy and timeliness of information about such death, illness or  
46 injury, and (5) department compliance with all applicable laws and  
47 regulations.

48 (c) On or before January 15, 2002, and annually thereafter, the panel  
49 shall issue an annual report that shall include its findings and

50 recommendations to the Governor and to the joint standing  
51 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
52 relating to public safety and the judiciary on its review of prisoner  
53 fatalities for the preceding year.

54 (d) Each municipal police department, the Division of State Police  
55 within the Department of Public Safety and the Department of  
56 Correction shall provide timely notice to the panel of the death, or of  
57 the illness or injury that results in the death, of any person in its  
58 custody or care.

59 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.

**PS**        *Joint Favorable*

**GAE**       *Joint Favorable*