



STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Good afternoon Senator Harp, Representative Merrill, Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Judiciary Committees. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

As you are well aware, a variety of actions this past year have forced the criminal justice system to evaluate how it operates. One issue is clear, the people of Connecticut must have confidence in their criminal justice system. The Governor's Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force and the legislature's hearings presented a variety of recommendations to improve our state's criminal justice system with a focus on our supervision of offenders in the community. Many of those recommendations resulted in Public Act 08-1, passed by the General Assembly in the January special session and signed into law by the Governor shortly thereafter.

For the purposes of this forum, I will update the Committees on five areas arising from Public Act 08-1 for which the Office of Policy and Management and/or the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC) have primary responsibility.

First, Section 38 of Public Act 08-1 tasked the CJPAC with sponsoring a full day review of the criminal justice system specifically for members of the criminal justice system. I was pleased to announce at this morning's CJPAC meeting that we will be conducting two of these training days in the coming months. This first session will be held on July 10th at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven and we have tentatively scheduled the second day for early September in the Hartford area. This review will contain presentations from various criminal justice agencies and the Judicial Branch on progress that has been made in the last year and challenges yet to be met.

Secondly, Section 38 of Public Act 08-1 outlines new duties for the CJPAC in the area of re-entry strategy and services. The CJPAC is addressing this issue on two fronts. First, a working group led by Corrections Commissioner Lantz and comprised of a variety of executive agencies, the Judicial Branch, and the offices of the Chief State's Attorney and the Chief Public Defender meets regularly to assist in formulating re-entry policy and measure progress. This working group reports back to the full CJPAC and its recommendations were invaluable in assisting the Governor's Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force with its final report and recommendations. In addition, the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, in conjunction with the Department of Correction, has begun the process to embark on a more comprehensive approach to re-entry planning.

We have had several productive discussions with the nonprofit Ann E. Casey Foundation which has offered to assist the state with its efforts. I am very optimistic that as we move forward the support of the Casey Foundation and others will be very welcome and valuable.

The third issue I will address is the Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) Governing Board. As we all recognize, improving the information technology systems for our criminal justice agencies and the Judicial Branch is essential. Access to timely and accurate information allows criminal justice decision makers to make better informed decisions. A section 39 of Public Act 08-1 expands the membership of the CJIS Governing Board to include legislative representation and creates two co-chairs representing the executive and judicial branches. Recently, Governor Rell appointed Lieutenant Governor Michael Fedele as her co-chair, and Judge Patrick Carroll, the Deputy Chief Court Administrator, has been appointed to co-chair on behalf of the Judicial Branch. The first meeting of the CJIS Governing Board under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Fedele and Judge Carroll occurred on March 25th and the next meeting is scheduled for April 29th. In addition, the new legislation created the position of executive director for the CJIS Governing Board. This independent position that reports directly to the Board will oversee the design and implementation of the statewide information technology system for the sharing of criminal justice information as provided in Section 40 of the public act. We have begun advertising for this position with applications due by Monday, April 28th. The Lieutenant Governor will lead a subcommittee of the CJIS Governing Board to select a candidate shortly thereafter.

The fourth issue I will address pertains to Section 33 of Public Act 08-1. This section creates a committee to study the manner in which the state may effectively provide incentives to municipalities throughout the state to allow the siting of community based facilities. Last week, I was appointed the chair of this committee by Governor Rell. Currently, the Governor's office is collecting the appointments from legislative leadership. When those appointments have been made, I will schedule the first meeting of this group in the coming weeks. Findings and recommendations from this committee are due to the Governor and General Assembly no later than January 1, 2009.

The fifth and final issue I will address is the state's criminal justice research capacity. The Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, in concert with the state's Statistical Analysis Center funded by OPM at Central Connecticut State University's Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice, convened a standing Forecast/Research Working Group of data analysts from across the spectrum of the criminal justice community in state government. The purpose of this working group is to provide an ongoing forum for the deliberation and development of criminal justice information work products. This group, which meets monthly, includes OPM, Central Connecticut State University, the Judicial Branch, Department of Correction, Board of Pardons and Paroles, Department of Public

Safety, and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. This multi-agency working group of state research professionals should provide the backbone for the criminal justice system's research and data collection needs going forward.

Recently, the Division in conjunction with our state's Statistical Analysis Center at CCSU produced the following reports:

- 2008 Annual Recidivism Study. This report on the recidivism of offenders released from the custody of the Department of Correction and from probation clearly shows that offenders that receive community supervision are less likely to be arrested, convicted or incarcerated for a new offense than offenders that do not receive community supervision.
- 2008 Annual Connecticut Prison Population Projections Report. In this year's report we predict that the state's prison population will begin to gradually decline over the next year as recent initiatives and legislative changes take effect.

A presentation of these two reports was given to this morning's regularly scheduled CJPAC meeting by our lead researcher, Dr. Stephen Cox of CCSU. This meeting was broadcast by CTN and also taped for future broadcast. I also would offer to arrange a presentation of these reports by Dr. Cox and my staff to members of the Committees at a later date.

The Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division continues to produce our Monthly Correctional Population Indicators Report which monitors trends in admissions and releases from prison and probation. These products, along with all of the Division's reports, are available at the OPM website at www.ct.gov/opm.

Improving our criminal justice research capabilities is important issue for our state. I recognize that we have more work to do in this area, but I believe that in the past year we have begun to build the appropriate research and data infrastructure to deliver the information requested in an accurate and timely manner.

I offer my thanks to the members of the Committees for the opportunity to update them on recent changes to the criminal justice system and offer the assistance of the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division of the Office of Policy and Management as you continue your deliberations.

