

**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Testimony re: Raised Bill No. 6697**  
**An Act Establishing a Sentencing Commission**

**March 24, 2009**

**Submitted by Robert Farr, Chairman - Board of Pardons and Paroles**

Good Afternoon Chairmen Lawlor and McDonald and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Robert Farr, Chairman of the Board of Pardons & Paroles, and designated Chair of the Connecticut Sentencing Task Force. Raised bill no. 6697 is a proposal for the creation of a permanent Sentencing Commission that was supported by the Sentencing Task Force.

If Connecticut adopts a Sentencing Commission, they would join the majority of states who have one. This Sentencing Commission would review the existing criminal sentencing structure in the state, and any proposed changes thereto, including existing statutes, proposed legislation, and existing and proposed sentencing policies and practices, and make recommendations to the Governor, General Assembly and appropriate Criminal Justice agencies.

The current Sentencing Task Force has shown the effectiveness of the bringing together the various agencies to discuss and review legislative proposals. Last year the legislature adopted a psychiatric diversionary program and a bill reducing the length of the period of probation in some cases. Both of these proposals were reviewed and modified by the Sentencing Task Force.

Having all the effective agencies at the table to discuss in detail sentencing has shown itself to be an effective way to address the various concerns of the agencies. I believe that in a time of tight budgets, we could come up with effective proposals that could help reduce the costs of the criminal justice system, while improving service and protecting the public.

It is envisioned that the Commission will have an Executive Director, but in light of the current fiscal crisis it would be up to the legislature to determine how to provide some skeleton staffing either with existing personnel or with funding.

I have submitted with this testimony a copy of the recommendation for a Sentencing Commission by the Sentencing Task Force.

I appreciate your consideration of this proposal. I would be happy to any questions you may have.

Very truly yours,

*Robert Farr*

Robert Farr, Chairman