



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

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Senate Bill 889: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY AND
PLANNING DIVISION AND THE PUBLICATION OF REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS
BY THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Chair Winfield, Chair Stafstrom, Ranking Member Kissel, Ranking Member Fishbein, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **SB 889**, *An Act Concerning the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division and The Publication of Reports and Presentations by the Office of Policy and Management*.

I. Introduction

The Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, which is in the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), was established by Public Act 05-249 to promote a more effective and cohesive state criminal justice system. I serve as undersecretary of criminal justice policy and planning, a position appointed by the OPM Secretary. The division's duties include conducting in-depth analyses of criminal justice system data, determining the system's long-range needs, and identifying critical problems. The division collaborates closely with executive branch agencies, the Judicial Branch, and criminal justice system stakeholders, all of which provide information and data needed to perform our work.

The Office of Policy and Management Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (OPM CJPPD) manages statutory requirements that guide a large part of our production of monthly, quarterly, annual, and ad hoc research reports. We produce numerous reports throughout the year in response to current and priority topics, such as studies on the proportion of people who have experienced incarceration who enter Connecticut's homeless services system and the proportion of people who die of an accidental drug overdose death who have experienced incarceration. There are four major reports the division produces: *The Monthly Indicators Report*, *The Annual Connecticut Recidivism Study*, *The Annual Correctional Population Forecast Report*, and an annual report on prosecutorial decision-making data.

Many of the ad hoc reports are developed to inform discussions before monthly meetings of the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission (CJPAC), which I chair and is composed of administrators of points across the criminal justice system as well as system stakeholders. A research unit in our division is lead in developing these reports.

A grants unit in our administers more than a dozen state and federal grants. Examples of federal grants include The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, The National Criminal History Improvement Program, Stop Violence Against Women, Sexual Assault Services Program, and Residential Substance Abuse Treatment. State grants include Project Longevity and the Body-Worn Recording Equipment Reimbursement Grant Program.

II. Provisions in the bill

The bill would be the first major update of OPM CJPPD's statutory requirements since its inception in 2006. It accomplishes several objectives by: requiring a new annual report on criminal justice cross-system trends, collapsing multiple reports into one, prioritizing presentations and reports under CJPAC, and updating requirements to enable the division to broaden our scope to include more front-end system analyses.

Section Four of the bill would put in statute an annual *Trends in Connecticut's Criminal Justice System* report. OPM CJPPD produced the first such report in 2016 to provide readers with a concise review of system trends using charts, tables, and other visualization. The report widens the lens from monthly metrics analyzed in OPM CJPPD's *Monthly Indicators Report* to capture year-to-year and decade-long trends. The bill requires the report to contain, at a minimum, the following data: the number of reported crimes and arrests and the size of the populations on probation, parole, special parole and in prison. The analyses included will expand based on current topics from criminal justice system stakeholders. This section also repeals an existing requirement of an annual presentation to the Judiciary and Appropriations Committees, although we would be happy to present this report, along with submitting it, based on the chairs' preferences.

Sections 4 and 9 would take the current quarterly report of data on several variables involving people receiving risk reduction earned credits (RREC) and incorporate it into our division's *Annual Connecticut Recidivism Study*. We imagine that re-offense is a factor prompting the original RREC report, but the variables listed in statute don't lend themselves toward that analysis. We hope the new approach will generate the information being sought.

Section 1 and 5 revises several reporting requirements—regarding promoting a more effective and cohesive state criminal justice system, the outcomes of the state's reentry strategy, and the level of integration and coordination of the information technology systems used by the criminal justice agencies—and a full-day review of the state's criminal justice system. These requirements seem to envision lengthy reports, but in practice these topics are already produced in more focused and

discrete reports, in CJPAC's activities, and in OPM CJPPD's assistance to agencies and stakeholders. CJPAC routinely reviews presentations and reports on these topics in a more concentrated format. The meetings, to conform to open-meetings rules, are streamed and posted on OPM CJPPD's website. The full-day review has not been held in several years because of a loss of funds resulting from federal restrictions on funding conferences. There are insufficient state resources and staff to organize such an event. Instead, as with the prior reports, the topics that would be covered over a single day once a year would be spread across a year of CJPAC meetings.

Sections 3 and 9 would repeal certain requirements. Section 3 would repeal involving annual reporting on major program outcomes and strategies to measure them. The statutory requirement appears in the statute regarding the production of the *Monthly Indicators Report*, which OPM CJPPD conforms to, but "major programs" isn't clearly defined in statute. OPM CJPPD is currently working with the Judicial Branch to include more information on the pretrial system, including use of Jail Re-Interview Services and Treatment Pathways Program. Such data already fall within the scope of the *Monthly Indicators Report's* data elements per Section 4-680 of the Connecticut General Statutes, and we look forward to adding more pretrial analysis to this report.

The remaining three proposed repeals occur in Section 9. First, the bill would repeal the annual juvenile recidivism report. OPM CJPD development of this report would lead to a duplication of analysis the Judicial Branch already generates. The Judicial Branch administers services for most post-adjudicated youth, with the executive branch only serving youth in secure confinement whose cases have been transferred to the adult criminal justice system. The Judicial Branch already produces sophisticated juvenile recidivism analyses and routinely reports them to the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee. Second, this section would repeal a monthly report of data, which the OPM CJPPD has completed since 1999, on the number of outstanding re-arrest warrants from the Judicial Branch. To conform to the statute, OPM CJPPD posts data on its website, with no analysis, context, or purpose. Inquiries regarding the data have been rare. Third, this section would repeal a requirement that OPM administer grants for urban violence reduction within available appropriations. OPM doesn't receive funding for such a grant or have any record of administering it following legislative enactment in 2007.

Finally, there is language throughout the bill requiring that OPM CJPPD maintain completed reports on its website. This policy would codify existing practice and reflect the utility our division hopes visitors to our website derive from reports and other information.

III. Conclusion

Enacting of this bill would lead to more meaningful, timely, and valuable reports responsive to the current needs and interests of readers. It enables OPM CJPPD to broaden its scope of analysis to study and report with greater detail on the front end of the criminal justice system: reported crime, arrest, victimization, interventions for people with mental health and substance addiction

disorders, and diversionary strategies to avoid a criminal record. When our division was created, many of our requirements focused on corrections and the back end of the criminal justice system: jail and prison, parole decision-making, parole supervision, reentry. Understandably, state policymakers were concerned about significant growth in the correction population in the 1990s, crowding within correctional facilities, the construction of new facilities and the house of people out of state, and concern over costly and less effective outcomes. Connecticut has come a long way since then has pioneered innovative strategies, policies, practices, and cross-system collaboration that other states emulate. Our state has achieved substantial reductions in reported crime and arrest as well jail and prison populations enabling our state to close correctional facilities Connecticut must remain committed to effectively managing the size of its correction population, furthering positive system outcomes, and ensure progress is sustained.

Since its inception, OPM CJPPD has developed skill and expertise in these areas and is proud to contribute its reports to efforts to improve policy and practice. The division would like to respond to growing interest in the front end of the system and strategies to address racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system, lower crime, reduce victims, avoid costly admissions to the criminal justice system, and help avoid people receiving a criminal record. This a priority we have embraced, demonstrated in the enactment of Governor Lamont's bill (Public Act 19-59), which received unanimous support in the house and senate, requiring the annual collection, analysis, and reporting of prosecutorial decision-making data. In July 2020, this report became Connecticut's first intensive analysis of prosecutorial operations and workflow. OPM will deliver similar reports in future years, with an expanded dataset in future years as the prosecutors' electronic case management system comes online.

Updating our reporting requirements is crucial to OPM CJPPD's goal of contributing data analysis to state-level strategies to address crime challenges, lower victimization, provide treatment to behavioral health needs from the criminal justice system, address disparities, and increase diversion to avoid unnecessary use of a jail or prison bed. I hope our division can contribute meaningfully to a broader scope of criminal justice goals and objectives.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer questions from committee.