

**Council on Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 at 9:30 AM  
Room 1B of the LOB

**Members Present:** *Co-Chair Porter, Co-Chair Kushner, Rep. Fishbein, Senator Miner, Arulampalam, Bain, Cho, Clark, Corbett, Eppler-Epstein, Fox, Giles, Gordon, Hernandez, Jones, Medina, Murphy, Pelka, Sementilli*

**Members Not Present:** *James, Lewis, Palache*

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNCIL**

Co-Chair Porter called the meeting to order and welcomed all members to the first meeting of the Council. She asked everyone to introduce themselves and the agencies they represent.

**REVIEW CHARGE OF COUNCIL**

Porter directed members to the packet provided for the meeting as it included the public act that established the Council. She read that per Public Act 19-142, the Council "shall study discrimination faced by people in Connecticut living with a criminal record and develop recommendations for legislation to reduce or eliminate discrimination based on a person's criminal history."

Porter said that she wants to look at the barriers that individuals face when they return home post incarceration. She explained barriers exist in areas of credit, employment, housing and much more. Pelka pointed out that there are currently 554 barriers that exist in state statute.

Several members including Co-Kushner, Miner, Fishbein, and Pelka made comments about the charge of the Council, why it is necessary, and what they hope to accomplish.

**SET KEY DEADLINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

Porter began the discussion on what was expected of members. Her key expectations for the Council were as follows:

1. Host at least three public forums held around the state
2. Submit a report with recommendations for legislation back to the Labor and Public Employees Committee no later than February 1, 2020
3. Improve draft language from the bill that was first introduced during the 2019 Session

Cook stated that he had already agreed to coordinate two forums to be held at Department of Corrections facilities and one at a halfway house. Fishbein raised a concern about having a forum in a corrections facility as those individuals have not yet been released and felt any impact or had post-release experiences. He believed it may be fruitful to have forums that are more like public hearings (across the state) where anyone can partake. Porter said that due to the criminal justice system being a revolving door, there are more than likely individuals presently incarcerated who have already been incarcerated and can speak to the experiences the Council is hoping to capture and understand.

Gordon asked if the Council could consider doing more than three forums and looking at locations like Bridgeport and Waterbury. Clark offered Central Connecticut State University and suggested community colleges as locations. He also suggested creating a survey to distribute so that the Council could gather tangible data. McGuire added that the Council should solicit testimony as that allows for more participation.

Hernandez highlighted the need to also look at this through a 2-Gen lens so that the multigenerational and familial impact incarceration has can be addressed. Sementilli said that transportation barriers should be looked at as well as that can mean not be able to get to a job.

Miner asked if someone could go through the list of consequences and determine if there is a federal nexus for any of these. He also noted that the Insurance Industry, small business organizations, the CBIA and agencies of the like should be included in the conversation early on in the process.

### **APPOINT MEMBERS TO SUBCOMMITTEES**

Porter announced that the Council would have three subcommittees: Employment, Housing, and Research. Subcommittee chairs and proposed members were announced as follows:

#### **Employment Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Marc Pelka, OPM

**Members:** David McGuire - ACLU-CT, Commissioner Kurt Westby - Department of Labor, Representative Joe Polletta - Labor Committee House Ranking Member, Senator Craig Miner - Labor Committee Senate Ranking Member, Rochelle Palache - Service Employees' International Union/Local 32BJ, Amy Eppler-Epstein - New Haven Legal Assistance Association Reentry Clinic, Tiheba Bain -Justice Impacted Person, Member – Reentry Roundtable selection, Chairperson Carleton Giles - Board of Pardons and Parole

#### **Duties:**

1. Research discrimination in employment context
2. Develop legislative recommendations focused on ending discrimination and providing legal protections.

#### **Housing Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Richard Cho, CT Coalition to End Homelessness

**Members:** Diane Lewis - Voices of Women of Color, Amy Eppler-Epstein - New Haven Legal Assistance Association Reentry Clinic, Andrea James - National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, Steven Hernandez - Commission on Equity and Opportunity, Kenyatta Thompson - Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice, Commissioner Rollin Cook - Department of Correction, Member – Reentry Roundtable selection, Chairperson Carleton Giles - Board of Pardons and Parole

**Duties:**

1. Research discrimination in housing context
2. Develop legislative recommendations focused on ending discrimination and providing legal protections

**Research Subcommittee**

**Chair:** Andrew Clark, IMRP

**Members:** David McGuire - ACLU-CT, Marc Pelka - OPM, Tanya A. Hughes - CHRO, New Haven Legal Assistance Association Reentry Clinic, Subira Gordon - Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now, Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull - Department of Consumer Protection, Member – Reentry Roundtable selection

**Duties:**

1. Coordinate presentations by experts to Council
2. Schedule and publicize public forums
3. Conduct budget-related research and report on fiscal impact of discrimination and impact of legislative recommendations
4. Conduct research on impact of discrimination
5. Conduct research on progress other states have made
6. Conduct research on discrimination in contexts other than housing and employment and make legislative recommendations
7. Draft and edit report

Each Subcommittee Chair gave an overview of what they hoped to accomplish. Fishbein asked why there were differences in membership counts in each subcommittee. Porter said that these numbers might not be final at this time. Clark asked that subcommittee membership be capped so that meetings are manageable.

Miner said that certain constituent groups were lacking in membership. He said that he felt the subcommittees may be doomed if those groups were continued to be left out. Porter said that the cap should be determined and that if other members want to have additional slots added to subcommittees, they should send that information to both the Co-Chairs and Subcommittee Chairs.

Fishbein asked if folks can be added to the subcommittees if they are not part of the larger Council. There was then discussion on how to fill seats on each subcommittee and who would hold those seats.

**DISCUSSION OF LOCATIONS AND DATES FOR PUBLIC FORUMS**

Expectations that were already stated at the start of the meeting were reiterated. Porter said that the number of forums can be expanded.

**REVIEW, MODIFY, AND APPROVE A SUGGESTED TIMELINE**

Porter began to share a timeframe for the next several meeting dates and many agreed that the week of September 16<sup>th</sup> would work for the next meeting. It was determined that the 19<sup>th</sup> would be the date for the next full meeting of the Council, same time and location.

Porter said that moving forward they will seek majority for meetings and that the intent is for the full Council to meet monthly. Subcommittees meetings may vary.