

CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Recidivism Reduction Committee Meeting

Friday, September 7, 2012

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

DOC Café 24 Conference Room

Wethersfield, CT

In attendance:

Members: Leo Arnone-DOC, Vivien Blackford-CCJR, Steve Lanza-Family Re-Entry, Karl Lewis-DOC, Lauren Siembas –DMHAS (for Pat Rehmer), Maureen Price-Boreland-CPA, Susan Quinlan-Families in Crisis, Gary Roberge-CSSD, Alana Rosenberg-Yale School of Public Health, John Santa- Malta Prison Volunteers

Staff: Andrew Clark-Acting Executive Director/CCSU, Jason DePatie-CCSU

Guests: Sarah Russell-Quinnipiac University, Linda Meyer-Quinnipiac University, Bob Painter-CCSU

I. Approval of Minutes

Vivien Blackford requested a motion to accept the minutes of the March 9, 2012 meeting. The motion was moved by Maureen Price-Boreland and seconded by Leo Arnone. The vote passed unanimously.

II. Discussion of Draft Policy Paper: Evidenced-based Reentry Initiatives Devoted to Strengthening Positive Social Relationships

Vivien Blackford and Maureen Price-Boreland thanked Quinnipiac Law Professors Linda Meyer and Sarah Russell, Ryan Sarkoda, Ryan Budd, Theresa Gilbert, and Katrina Cessna for drafting this policy paper. The collaborative process of developing the paper was briefly explained and the ensuing discussion was structured in three parts: 1) Leo Arnone's impression on behalf of DOC; 2) committee members' general impressions; and 3) next steps—what should be done with this information? Members recommended changes to the report throughout this discussion.

1) Leo Arnone's Impression

Leo Arnone had some great first impressions after reading the committee's draft policy paper. He explained that he was talking to Karl Lewis on the way down to the meeting and was impressed because it has been a number of years since he has seen some of these ideas. He commented that a few recommendations may need to be reworked and he would like to further study the disparity issue. Overall, he thought that this paper would be useful in helping move the department forward and reaffirmed the importance of many of the changes being made within DOC.

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2) Committee Members' Impressions

John Santa thought that it would be very helpful for the committee to know which recommendations DOC is currently addressing and which would be most useful to the department. The reality is a limited number of recommendations will go to the legislature this year and they should be prioritized. Leo Arnone responded that DOC would provide an outline of priorities in regard to these recommendations.

Dr. Bob Painter explained that sometimes it is difficult to turn social science into an effective argument for igniting institutional change and that is why Leo Arnone and others at DOC will be vital to translating the social science to manageable steps effecting change. Leo Arnone then discussed the various models that have existed within DOC from the 1960s through today including the social science model in regard to alcohol and drug treatment programs, the medical model, and finally the punitive model.

Steve Lanza suggested making the paper's recommendations more clear in regard to cost benefit analysis and perhaps using this method to rank priorities.

Alana Rosenberg suggested changing a few titles in the second part of the report and highlighting the disparity issue to a greater extent. She also volunteered to send additional sources for disparity recommendations.

Andrew Clark elaborated on Washington State's cost benefit model and invited members to a meeting with PEW to discuss Connecticut's Results First Program.

Maureen Price-Boreland suggested adding additional explanation in regard to the role women play in families and the community.

3) Next Steps—What should be done with this information?

Committee members discussed the very high phone rates for family members making calls to DOC. Discussion focused on efforts in other states to address this issue and the options that are available to Connecticut. Steve Lanza suggested that the committee expand thinking to include video chatting. One goal discussed by the committee was to use phone calls as a way to strengthen positive social interactions. The committee's consensus was that this is an issue the committee should continue to study and consider for a legislative recommendation. Andrew Clark commented that the Sentencing Commission's legislative proposals should be looked at as a package, if the Commission recommends a proposal that will create additional financial obligations, it is also important to have a proposal that will accrue future savings.

Leo Arnone committed to providing the committee with guidance as to which recommendations could be implemented administratively, which would require legislative action, and which would require further study. Additionally, DOC will provide more information on the recommendations that are currently being implemented.