

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION (CJPAC)
MINUTES
FOR
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2011 MEETING**

Members Present: Chairman Michael Lawlor, *Undersecretary, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, OPM*; Pat Carroll, *Deputy Chief Court Administrator*; Leo Arnone, *Commissioner, Department of Correction*; Dan Stebbins, *Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Safety*; Kevin Kane, *Chief State's Attorney*; Dan Bannish, *Department of Corrections*; Loel Meckel, *Assistant Director Division of Forensic Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services*; Erika Tindill, *Chairwoman, Board of Pardons and Paroles*; William Carbone, *Exec. Director, Judicial Branch – Court Support Services Division*; Dennis Murphy, *Deputy Commissioner, Department of Labor*; Richard Healey, Brian Mahoney, *Department of Education*; Theresa DeFrancis, *Attorney, Department of Education*; Susan Storey, *Chief Public Defender*; Nancy Kushins, *Executive Director, Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Center*; Claudette Beaulieu, *Department of Social Services*; Elizabeth (Libby) Graham, *Department of Children and Families*; Joette Katz, *Commissioner Department of Children and Families*, Senator John A. Kissel, *Senate Republicans*.

I. Welcome Mike Lawlor, Undersecretary, OPM CJPPD

The meeting was called to order at 9:10am by CJPAC Chairman Mike Lawlor. Chairman Lawlor stated that the purpose of this meeting was to compare notes since there are changes on the budget that had been passed recently. Spoke briefly about the Union agreements and to consider the Plan B proposal.

II. Member Discussion

Chairman Lawlor explains the changes that could occur with the upcoming budget. He talked briefly about the monthly indicators report. The report showed a small drop in the prison population which has lead to a ten year low. There was also a reduction in the amount of monthly criminal arrests, down 15% compared to the previous 3 years. Chairman Lawlor said that these trends are encouraging and that they indicate progress towards the goal of crime rate reduction.

Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner Leo Arnone stated that the changes in the budget may have a significant impact on the operation of correction services. He then focused on the department's goal of reducing recidivism rates. The commissioner talked briefly about a provision for an earned time off credit which would allow an inmate time off based on good behavior. These earned credits can grant an inmate a maximum of 5 days per month. Commissioner Arnone felt that this was a good step in reducing recidivism rates and lowering crime rates in general. Another program the commissioner talked about was a driving under the influence (DUI) program which allowed inmates who are convicted of DUI to serve the end of their sentence at home. Only inmates who participated in rehabilitation programs would be eligible. To help reduce costs the Department would like to close a moderate sized facility. They projected that the closing would occur in January with no layoffs. If Plan B was implemented this would cause DOC to close a facility in July. The commissioner warned that this facility may not be their top pick due to the time constraints.

Judge Carroll spoke of a new process to submit the Judiciary budget to the governor. This process moved smoothly and the adopted budget did not have any unexpected surprises. They felt that this was a success. However, the changes found within Plan B might alter their budget. It was not known what the direct impact would be but Judge Carroll felt that there was the potential for substantial changes to their budget. Judge Carroll stated that this could mean layoffs based on "Last in First Out" system and reassessing their total staff. Plan B will also affect programs that the branch oversees if layoffs do occur.

Department of Children and Families Deputy Commissioner Elizabeth Graham talked about changes that they have implemented to reduce costs. They have "right sized" case loads, transferred parole officers to other areas, removed a large amount of vacancies, and cut the Board and Care program. Deputy Commissioner Graham spoke briefly about the Raise the Age initiative for juveniles. The department felt that Raise the Age helped to better support children, as well as reduce the burden on the corrections system. Plan B would mean a couple changes: caseload reductions for social workers which could increase workloads, close the intake of voluntary services for needy families and would require them to layoff 106 staff.

Department of Social Services (DSS) Deputy Commissioner Claudette Beaulieu spoke of the implementation of Medicaid for Low Income Adults and changes that might occur from budget proposals. The Medicaid for Low Income Adults is a medical reimbursement for those adults that qualify. When first implemented the rate of eligible adults exceeded expectations and became an area of great concern due to the cost increases. Commissioner Beaulieu stated that reductions would be necessary and that service packages would be brought to a level that the State can live with. The commissioner then spoke about the budget. DSS did receive some State aid in the form of additional rental subsidies and emergency homeless housing facilities as well as money for domestic violence shelters. The Deputy Commissioner did note that there could be large reductions in a lot of community non profits (human resources) due to changes budget cuts. Implementation of Plan B would mean a reduction in services such as the elimination of SAGA cash, Transportation to Work and Children's Trust Fund. There is also the potential for layoffs of about 9 staff members.

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Executive Director Nancy Kushins said that since they do not have a budget within the state, Plan B would not affect them. Executive Director Kushins did note that Plan B budget would hurt many non profits. She said that many non profits get federal dollars which the state then matches. With the budget cuts as well as the potential for cuts within the federal government this could lead to a significant reduction in the services that non profits could provide.

CT Board of Pardons & Paroles Chairman Erika Tindill talked briefly about risk reduction earned credits. Parole Manager Richard Sparaco spoke. He said that since they are attached to the DOC Plan B did not directly affect them. They are currently planning for changes in the future. Mr. Sparaco did say that there may be other services that parolees use could be affected if this plan did not go through.

Chief Public Defender Susan Storey spoke about the Public Defender's budget. The Chief Public Defenders office worked in collaboration with OPM and the Appropriations committee to craft a budget that they all could live with. She did state that she would like to see death penalty repealed since it is a considerable cost on their budget at 7%. Another issue that the office had was the consolidation of child protection commission. This commission would be placed with public defender's office. The office would like to see an increase in permanent staff to focus on juvenile cases due to this increase in responsibility. Plan B would bring them back to 1995 in terms of caseloads. It would require them to layoff 45 temp staff which includes 17 lawyers. Plan B would also require them to layoff an additional 22 permanent staff members.

Department of Education Attorney Theresa DeFrancis said that if Plan B reductions would lead to the end of grants to local towns and the closure of the technical schools. The reduction of the grants would be aimed at the education cost sharing grant and would be a \$269 million reduction in state spending. The closure of the state technical schools would require 10,000 students to return to their public schools as well as layoffs from those specific areas. Plan B would also eliminate services bureaus, afterschool programs, young parents, health services, and primary mental health program. She is concerned about the technical school closures since it would create a great burden on public schools to provide these programs. In total there would be a reduction in staff of about 1,410 people with the majority coming from the technical schools.

Division of Forensic Services Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Assistant Director Loel Meckel stated that Plan B would require DMHAS to reduce staff in Danbury but Jail Diversion would continue to serve Danbury court. The cuts would also call for the closure of 60 substance abuse treatment beds in Merritt Hall at Connecticut Valley Hospital.. While Plan B does not close DMHAS' forensic programs, most forensic clients transition to the larger DMHAS system so service reductions there may affect those clients.

Court Support Services Judicial Branch Executive Director William Carbone talked mainly about the pre trial population. He stated that the state is seeing decreases due to a reduction of arrests. They have also experienced lower recidivism rates from 48% to 43% and now to 42% (5% over one period). The month of March showed a drop of 40% drop which is the largest drop the branch has seen. Executive Director Carbone attributes these reductions to collaboration between agencies, and integrated results based accountability system which has created more uniformity in terms of releases. The alternative incarceration centers system in the state has also helped to reduce the recidivism rate which has dropped from 45% in 2007 to 33% currently.

Connecticut Department of Labor Deputy Commissioner Dennis Murphy stated that Governor's budget does not affect the Department of Labor in terms of corrections. However, he did say that the elimination of opportunities industrialization centers throughout the State would mean a reduction in 65 employees from the department.

Public Member Richard Healey feels that risk assessment is based on a valid model. He said that the state needs to make sure that it is not simply reducing prison populations to close budget gaps.

Chief State's Attorney Kevin Kane. The past 10 years arrests have remained constant. Attorney Kane said that the state needs to focus on the cases that first come into the system. Both prosecution and defense are very important when a new case comes up and there needs to be support systems in place for public defenders otherwise this system may lead to poor decision making. Mr. Kane said that Plan B would require them to layoff 16 permanent and 44 temp staff members which would increase caseloads to other full time staff. They have already seen a major reduction in their budget through the approved budget. Plan B will only make it more difficult to pay for operating budget programs. If Plan B does go forward they will have to close down their financial crime program, relocate staff, and add more caseloads to current prosecutors.

Department of Public Safety Deputy Commissioner Col. Danny Stebbins stated that the department is cutting as much as they can without hurting safety. With the current budget they may have to reduce school resource officers, reduce in support staff and defer the next class until the attrition rates get too high. They are planning on restructuring the dispatch system and have only 4 or 5 locations. Col. Stebbins feels that Plan B would impact public safety. It would require them to reduce or eliminate training which would in turn pass the cost on to someone else.

Health Services Department of Corrections Program Director Dr. Dan Bannish spoke about different programs the department wants to implement. The department currently tries to maximize any federal dollars that they receive to reduce the burden on the state budget. Dr. Bannish would like to see the implementation of a separate nursing home for inmates instead of using existing nursing homes. Currently over 100 inmates would be eligible for this service. Dementia was another problem that the department needs to face. Dr. Bannish said that he would not like to create dementia unit within the prisons because it would not be cost effective. He noted quickly that Plan B might create problems for older inmates.

III. Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes approved without discussion.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.