

V. R. E. A. C

Victims' Rights Enforcement Advisory Commission

Minutes
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2014
Legislative Office Building, Room 1B
300 Capitol Ave., Hartford
2:00 – 4:00p.m.

Link to video of meeting: <http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/ctnplayer.asp?odID=10762>

1. Welcome and Introductions --- The meeting was called to order at 2:06pm.

a. Membership Introductions:

Members Present: Hakima Bey-Coon, Esq., Merit Lajoie, Elliot N. Solomon, Judge Deputy Chief Court Administrator (in place for Hon. Patrick Carroll, III, Esq.), Linda J. Cimino, Laura Cordes, Scott Semple, Carleton Giles, Janice Heggie Margolis, Kevin T. Kane, Esq., Jillian Knox, Anne Mahoney, Esq., Jessica Pizzano, Bethany Phillips, Esq., James C. Rovella and Dora B. Schriro.

Members Absent: Andrew Woods, Susan O. Storey, Esq., Dawn Luddy, Karen Jarmoc, Ana Gonzalez, and Mario T Gaboury, Esq.

b. **Approval of the Minutes – September 17, 2014**

Changes to the minutes were suggested by Linda Cimino, Andrew Woods (via email), Laura Cordes and Janice Heggie-Margolis. Those changes were accepted and are reflected in the September 17th minutes.

c. **Commission Communications**

Hakima Bey-Coon, reported to the committee that Senator Ayala, phoned the OVA office and requested for an additional hearing date to be added in Bridgeport to allow easier access for individuals in the southern part of the state. After a brief discussion, the Commission agreed to add another public hearing to their schedule.

2. Public Hearing Schedule:

Hakima Bey-Coon, explained that the OVA has done press releases and has sent emails informing the public about the upcoming public hearings. They will do another round of press releases and emails when the room numbers are confirmed. The following hearing dates have been confirmed and a date and venue for Bridgeport will be announced when those details are available:

- a. Public Hearing Dates
 - i. October 20, 2014 (New Haven) Albertus Magnus College, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
 - ii. October 27, 2014 (Hartford) Hartford Public Library, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
 - iii. November 5, 2014 Norwich, CT (confirmed)
- b. Testimony Parameters

After discussion by the Commission the following parameters were agreed upon:

- Testimony will be accepted in both written and oral form.
- Testimony will be limited to 3-5 minutes, with time allotted for follow-up questions from the Commission.
- There will be a sign-up sheet at each public hearing, but individuals will not be required to identify themselves by name if they do not wish to do so. There will be corresponding numbers for each line on the signup sheet, and individuals not wishing to identify themselves can sign in as “anonymous” and be called by number.
- All written copies of testimony will be disseminated to the Commission.
- Additional press releases and announcements will be sent informing those who wish to testify that this is a public meeting and press/video cameras may present. They will also be informed that sexual assault and MADD advocates will be on hand for any individual needing to speak with one.
- The Commission is seeking input from individuals regarding how they were treated during the criminal justice process (i.e. were they made aware of their rights, were they able to exercise those rights, were they made aware of services, were they able to utilize those services).

3. Subcommittee Reports

- a. Pre-arrest/Arraignment
Commissioner Schriro stated that this subcommittee has not met since the Commissions’ last full meeting.
- b. Prosecution/Conviction
Chief States’ Attorney Kane stated that this subcommittee has not met since the Commissions’ last full meeting.
- c. Post-conviction/Violation status
Interim Commissioner Semple states this this subcommittee had a meeting on September 30th. They reviewed the subcommittee’s previous agenda and recommendations and discussed the purpose of the subcommittee. At their next meeting they will choose an agenda for recommendations to be presented to the full Commission. Interim Commissioner Semple also referred a matter before his subcommittee to the Pre-arrest/Arraignment subcommittee.

4. Discussion Topics

- a. Definition of a “Victim”

- i. After discussion from the Commission it was decided that they would wait until after the public hearings when they have had a chance to solicit input from victims before making considerations on a universal definition and holding a vote.
- ii. Vote on the adoption of a universal definition - HELD

5. Review of Presentation from Guest Speaker: Doug Beloof, J.D., Professor of Law

- a. Commission member comment
- b. Mike Lawlor, Under Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning

-Merit introduced Mike Lawlor who came in light of the presentation on October 17th by Professor Douglas Beloof.

-Undersecretary Lawlor offered a historical context for the 1996 amendment to the Constitution for crime victims and the creation of the Office of the Victim Advocate.

- The Commission and Undersecretary Lawlor discussed options available in regard to statutory or constitutional changes for added enforcement mechanisms and the merits of pursuing either option.

6. Public Comment

-Jim Clark from the Victim Rights Center addressed that the federal system has a victim's right act. He stated that there is nothing stopping the legislature of Connecticut from taking our constitutional victim rights and creating a statutory parallel. To avoid the battle of amending the constitution, the commission should focus on creating statutory remedies.

7. Other Business

No other business.

8. Wrap Up and Next Meeting Date – October 15, 2014

-Office of Victim Services presentation on CT SAVIN and Department of Correction Victim Services Unit presentation on victim notification.

-The next meeting will hold a discussion on cases in other jurisdictions where a victim filed an appeal to the Appellate Court so we can understand what the violations were and how they were addressed by the court.

9. Adjournment 4:00 pm