JJPOC Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2021
2pm-3:30pm
Zoom Conference Call

Attendance:

Sen. Gary Winfield	Hector Glynn	Stacy Shulman
Dep. Secretary Kosta Diamantis	Derrick Gordon	Chief Fred Spagnolo
Chief Joshua Bernegger	Susan Hamilton	Martha Stone
Erica Bromley	Amy Marracino	**TYJI Staff:**
Hon. Judge Patrick Carroll	Desi Nesmith	William Carbone
Brian Casinghino	Christina Quaranta	Danielle Cooper
Hon. Judge B. Conway	Angel Quiros	Susan Cusano
Vannessa Dorantes	Janeen Reid	Erika Nowakowski
Sarah Eagan	Gary Roberge	Kelly Orts
Tais Ericson	Macklin Roman	Donna Pfrommer
Lisa Sementilli		

Welcome and Introductions

Due to the new JJPOC membership, Tow Youth Justice Institute made an announcement that there will be committee members transitioning in and out of membership. The roll call is still being updated and patience is appreciated.

Representative Walker is not available for this meeting, therefore, Senator Winfield will moderate this meeting.

Acceptance of Minutes of JJPOC

Senator Winfield asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the February 18, 2021 meeting. The motion to accept the minutes was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Brief Update on JJPOC Legislation

Senator Winfield gave a brief update to the members of the JJPOC regarding the JJPOC recommendations. The packet has arrived at the Judiciary Committee. There will be discussions on what elements of the packet will go into the Bill. The decision will be made in a few days and Senator Winfield will notify the Leadership of the JJPOC, so they are aware of what is happening in the Judiciary Committee. The decision has not been finalized yet, but it is an on-going discussion.

Overview of Meeting

William Carbone, Executive Director of the Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI) at the University of New Haven, gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda. There are two items being discussed in this meeting; an update on the auto theft presentation that was made a year ago from Ken Barone of IMRP at CCSU, as well as an added perspective from law enforcement by Chief Fred Spagnolo. The second item on the agenda is an update on the Equity Dashboard, as recommended by the IOYouth Task Force.

Tow Youth Justice Institute also announced that the committee members will be receiving an invitation to the CTJ Reform Forum, which will be held for with three different virtual sessions on three different dates. In attendance will be content experts as well as national content experts who will serve as panelists. The online procedures were explained and the committee members were asked to share the information with their networks.

Update on IOYouth Equity Dashboard

Brian Hill, co-chair of the Cross-Agency Data Sharing Workgroup, presented an updated on the Equity Dashboard, which was a recommendation approved by the IO Youth Task Force, to look into an in-depth gathering of information on racial and ethnic disparities across the system.

Marc Pelka, Undersecretary at OPM, acknowledged and praised the work done by the Judicial Branch, key stakeholders, and the JJPOC in helping to improve outcomes for youth with the development of the Equity Dashboard. The joint presentation on the inner branch's coordination efforts by Brian Hill and Bryan Sperry from the Judicial Branch and Kevin O'Neary who works in the Criminal Justice Division at OPM in setting up the Equity Dashboard. This team has reviewed case studies from other states, eligible and relevant data involving the judicial branch and explored pathways for the information to reach OPM, so the agency can host the dashboard and collaborate with the chief data officer staff in envisioning the implementation of the Equity Dashboard. This is a great example of a cross branch initiative.

The IOYouth Task Force recommended to utilize Juvenile Justice Administration and publicly available data in an equity dashboard to monitor and compare system involvement for youth of different races and ethnicities in specific ways based on current system disparities. These findings were then shared and discussed with the JJPOC's Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup to inform ongoing system improvement. They started their work last fall by starting discussions with members of the RED Workgroup, Judicial Branch partners, and OPM. The RED Co-Chairs were able to provide some foundational thoughts on key decision points, communication efforts, and broader audiences. recommendation. is important, when looking at these key decision points, to look at them in an operational perspective. Brian Hill also looks forward to their continued partnership as they get prototypes built and receive feedback from the co-chairs and workgroups as to how they can best present this information for their use in policy recommendations and ultimately to use of this committee board.

With consultation from the Counsel of State Government's and those who were involved in the IOYouth Project, including Nina Solomon and Emily Rogers, they reviewed examples from other states, including Colorado and Massachusetts. They have been very intentional in getting guidance from the Council of State Government's at the beginning of the process and various checkpoints along the way.

In regard to the development timeline, rollout and sustainability, Kevin Neary, who is the Lead Planning Analyst in the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division research unit, continued the presentation explain the next steps. The research unit has come in to help facilitate taking of the data sources and getting it into a dashboard hosting environment.

In February of this year, CSSD sent over early sample data that, to this point, captures how the data that would be used in the dashboards is structured, as well as the metric information that would be packaged along with this data. This is a key step for the development of this, it allows them to both see how the underlying data is going to look initially and then understand what may be needed to transform it into a dashboard environment.

In terms of the broader timeline, the first set of activities is the front-end design of the dashboard. It is in the planning stages of how it is going to look, what the design will be, what elements a user will navigate through and select, and what kind of capabilities do they need to build into the front end to make sure that they control for small cell sizes or other things that may occur as they look into the different sub groupings of the data. Their plan is to collaborate with the workgroups to get feedback to continue to refine the vision of what the front-end design will ultimately look like. They are targeting to have an early dynamic pilot iteration dashboard by late 2021.

Concurrently, there is also an infrastructure need to support this dashboard in a sustainable ongoing way. Initially, the data should be prepared for this dashboard, transmitted manually over to OPM and then uploaded into the dashboard. To make this sustainable long term, there needs to be some type of dynamic data exchange infrastructure. This will be done through partnership with both OPM and CSSD in the Judicial Branch. To support this, they envision in the coming months, there will be a drill down into the technical needs and capabilities that are needed to establish and build those dynamic exchange capabilities. They will then need to work on developing and implementing these solutions to support the dynamic population of the dashboard.

As part of their efforts to support and enhance the capabilities to deliver this dashboard they had the opportunity to work with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which designates across each state statistical analysis centers to help support justice statistics and research initiatives across the country. They felt this year's grant would be a good opportunity for some cross-branch partnership to try and apply for the grant to support this dashboard. They have partnered with the Judicial Branch, as well as the Chief Data Officer and his team to put together an application to get funding through the BJS. The request was submitted today (March 18th, 2021).

Presentation on Car Thefts, Traffic Stops, Use of Force, and Taser Use

Ken Barone from the Institute for Municipal Regional Policy at CCSU, presented on the State of Connecticut's Motor Vehicle Theft Trends. He acknowledges that this presentation will mainly focus on auto thefts and briefly mention updates on use of force, pedestrian stops, and taser data.

Vehicle thefts have been trending mostly downward in the last 26 years. 2019 saw the fewest motor vehicle thefts since they started capturing the data with only 5,964. There has been an uptick in 2020, which is explainable and mostly puts 2020 in line with the past 5 years. The graphs provide an idea of

where CT has been in the last five years, with a 43% reduction in auto thefts across the nation in the past 26 years and a 77% reduction in CT.

Motor vehicle thefts are reported at a higher percentage than other crimes nationally, and have one of the lowest clearance rates. It is important to understand that the percentage of victimization reported based on the report is almost 80%. The percent of offenses cleared by arrest nationally is one of the lowest of all offenses, 13.8% lower than the State of Connecticut.

In the past decade, Connecticut's motor vehicle theft rate has remained below the national average. It has dropped by a lower percentage than seen nationally between 2010 and 2019. There was a significant decline in motor vehicle thefts between 2018 and 2019 17% fewer motor vehicle thefts in 2019 than in 2018. A lot of attention is being paid more towards 2020's motor vehicle theft rate which is up from 2019. Preliminary numbers indicate that 2020 data of motor vehicle thefts are still about 3% lower than the 2018 rate and the 2020 numbers are more in line with the national trend. Rather than 2020, 2019 is the outlier due to the significant reduction in motor vehicle thefts.

The National Insurance Crime Bureau found that the top 10 theft dates between 2017 and 2019 occurred in November, December, January, and February. This is typically correlated with individuals warming up their vehicles and leaving the keys in the car unattended. There is no national data yet for 2020.

The National Insurance Crime Reports stated that auto thefts took a dramatic leap upward in 2020 compared to 2019 due to the pandemic. This information is not isolated to Connecticut and was happening across country. Just as seen in Connecticut, the spike in crime between 2013 and 2019 has largely been driven by the advancement of technology in vehicles and individuals leaving keys in their car as a result of that technology.

There are fewer vehicle thefts are occurring in the largest cities in Connecticut compared to 10 years ago. Preliminary 2020 data indicates that these cities (Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford) accounted for 40% of all MVT but only 31% in 2019. Ken feels that this number will change and that there has been some under reporting.

The increase in MVT continues to be driven by an increase in communities with a population less than 50,000 people. Small towns with less than 25,000 individuals, have seen a 25% increase in MVT's. Larger towns with over 100,000 individuals have seen a 22% decrease in MVT's. Map visualizations were provided to show the changing trends. Waterbury has become an outlier and an epicenter of MVT's in a way that other medium and large size cities have not been.

There has been a lot of attention paid to whether or not changes to Connecticut's Raise the Age law's and reforms made to Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System are a cause for increase in MVT's. The data states that there is no evidence to support a claim that Raise the Minimum Age laws have caused an increase in MVT's. It was also pointed out that changes to the Juvenile Justice system would impact every year, the increase you see in 2020 is likely correlated to the pandemic but Raise the Age reforms were in effect in 2019 during the lowest year of MVT's on record. The idea that there be harsher penalties for juveniles that commit these offenses is not likely to make a dent in the MVT rate. Partially because of the science on deterrence on young adults not being as effective.

The ages of those arrested for MVTs have held steady in Connecticut, which is based on an 11% percent clearance rate. When you see an increase in 15-to-19-year olds you also see a decrease in 20-24-year olds or the 10-14 year olds. Clearance rates for many of the communities with the largest increases in MVT's are mostly lower than the statewide average. If you look into some of the more suburban communities in the Central Connecticut area that have seen larger MVT's in the last few years, their clearance rates are lower than the states average at about 5% compared to the state average of 11%.

Law Enforcement Perspective by Chief Spagnolo of Waterbury PD

Chief Spagnolo thanked the members of the JJPOC for the opportunity to provide a law enforcement perspective on auto thefts and the trends that they are seeing as well as acknowledge the work done by Ken Barone and OPM.

Chief Spagnolo has spoken to Chiefs throughout the state about this subject, both suburban and urban areas. In Waterbury in 2020, they experienced 546 cars stolen in the city as well as recovered 317 cars that were stolen outside of the city and brought back to Waterbury totaling 863 incidents of auto theft. It is not necessarily only the auto thefts but the harmful behavior that occurs, which is associated with auto theft occurs by predominately individuals in the juvenile age range.

They have about 48 kids in Waterbury that recidivate in auto theft. Some of the kids they were able to help through different programs including their mentoring programs and other diversionary programs. However, there is a small group of kids that they are unable to help. With partnership from DCF, their own juvenile probation office, juvenile prosecutor, and their own board of education; they looked at 12 kids who continue to recidivate in auto theft. Their most concerning pattern is that the average age for the auto thefts is age 15. Theses 12 kids were arrested approximately 8 times in a 2 ½ year span for auto theft. During that 2 ½ year span, 11 of these kids have also been arrested for weapons violations. including possession of a firearm. 4 of the 12 kids have multiple weapons arrests and have been in possession of a handgun multiple times throughout the 2-year period. Working with their Board of Education, they have also found that 11 of these kids also have 55 incidents or more of school discipline within their school system. Of these 12 kids, the Waterbury police responded to calls for them an average of 30 times outside the arrest. All 12 of the kids accounted for 84 of the vehicles that were stolen in Waterbury. Of the 12 kids, one is deceased, five are now adults and incarcerated in the DOC, of the six that are still juveniles, three are in detention centers, and four remain in the community. A few days prior to this meeting, 3 of the 4 engaged in a stolen vehicle incident in Naugatuck.

When you look at this from the law enforcement perspective, Chief Spagnolo feels that they can certainly do better when it comes to addressing juveniles. But their major concern is this small percentage of high risk juveniles in their community and have not been able to help. The issue that needs to be addressed is the is the fact that what they are doing for these 12 kids in his community as well as other communities, is a complete failure and puts themselves, as well as the community, at risk.

Discussions

Mark Pelka wanted to thank both presenters for the information that was presented. The analysis and experience of an urban police chief shows that although many smaller jurisdictions are experiencing increases in auto thefts, their large cities experience auto theft at 2 to 3 times the statewide rate. He

appreciated the need for a comprehensive approach based on the low the clearance rate is.We need to match this with the experience and communities that are looking to achieve better outcomes for youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System. Marc Pelka also asked what the proven and effective strategies for youth were who are at higher risk.

Chief Spagnolo responded that they have worked with people including Judge Conway, Martha Stone, and many other folks at this meeting. They have done a great job coming up with significant programs and diversionary opportunities reducing their arrest rate by over 50%. Some of the programs that they worked on, through partnership with their juvenile probation officers, is a mentor program called Pal as well as developed a strong relationship with their workforce investment board giving kids an opportunity to know that there are different options out there. They have also been recently working with non-profit organizations one of them in particular is located in New Haven and refers juveniles that are in trouble to these organizations to explore and identify alternatives. Lastly, they have created the trauma taskforce in Waterbury to identify kids exposed to trauma prior to police investigation.

CTJA recognizes that it is not solely the job of the police to do those wraparound services and identify what is going wrong. There is an overreliance on police and it would be better for everyone here (at the JJPOC) to talk about high risk, high needs, and what they may need instead of circulating those 12 kids around the same program and seeing the same faces; and how we should look into changing this programing. She recommends youth advocate programs that are 24/7 wraparound high needs, high risk only use care that is currently not in Connecticut.

Brian Casinghino agrees with the concerns expressed by Chief Spagnolo. The reason they are seeing many of the problems is due to the perception by many of the kids that come before them know that there is no accountability in our system. He agrees that this is not a Raise the Age issue, but the system is not sending the appropriate message in many of these cases.

Susan Hamilton also extended her appreciation to Ken Barone and Chief Spagnola for providing their information and feedback in regard to car thefts. Susan felt it was important to mention that a lot of the things that they are doing now, are working well and that there is a small population of kids that we need to really look at and identify what can be done differently with these types of kids. To look at this in a punishment or accountability perspective solely, is not going to get us collectively where we want to be.

There was further discussion that focused on alternative solutions for addressing high risk juveniles, including discovering the root issues, wraparound services, early identification, There was also further clarification on accountability versus responsibility, and the addition of restorative practices.

Chief Spagnolo mentioned that they are looking for the particular situations surrounding children including their housing situation and family situation. He identified that this information is still being compiled but is extremely important. Dr. Ruffin, the Waterbury school's superintendent is dedicated to working on the disciplinary process and the system in Waterbury.

Chief Bernegger explained that the highest risk youth, such as the 12 Chief Spagnolo spoke of, need to be separated from the negative influences in their lives and address their backstory so that they are not placed right back into the environment that is influencing their delinquent, dangerous behavior.

OCA cautioned the JJPOC in responding to crime trends during a global pandemic that affected everything from families' basic needs, to children's access to services and education, and the functioning of the court system. Connecticut does need to strengthen the service array at the deepest end, and we should focus on research-based solutions for these children. OCA this year will be taking a deeper dive into looking at histories of kids at MYI who found their way through our system.

Ken Barone briefly provided an update regarding use of force and taser data collection, as well as pedestrian and traffic stop data, particularly focusing on youth. In 2020, the state started requiring the collection of use of force data by police departments. Police departments had to start reporting data dating back to 2019, which did not start until right around the pandemic. There have been some challenges getting it up and running but they are making progress towards it.

2019 data shows that 55 departments have currently reported use of force data for a total of 403 incidents, not including their three largest cities: Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven yet. Based on this data, of the 403 use of force incidents currently reported for 2019 there was one 9-year-old female, one 10-year-old, six 12-year old's, four 14-year-olds, six 15-year-olds, nine 16-year-olds, and eleven 17-year-olds totaling 39 individuals' so far, under the age of 18 where police used force. It is important to keep in mind that law enforcement are only required to report use of force incidents that result in serious physical injury or may result in serious physical injury.

They have been collecting data since 2015 on tasers; they have full taser data through 2019, they are in the process of putting together 2020's data set. Together, on average, there are about 35 individuals under the age of 18 that are involved in incidents involving a taser. On an annual basis, youth they have seen as young as 7 in the State of Connecticut, in 2016, that was involved with a taser, more commonly youth are between the ages of 13 and 17 that make up a vast majority of those individuals involved in taser incidents. It is pretty consistent between 33 and 39 youth under the age of 18 each year involved in a taser incident out of a total of about 600 taser incidents each year.

Regarding a brief update with the traffic stop data, there has been a significant reduction in traffic stops here in Connecticut, in 2020, as a result of the pandemic. They are almost finished putting together their traffic stop data set and you will see about half as many traffic stop's occurred in 2020 as did the previous year. The months that took the biggest hits were April, May, and June where there were virtually no traffic stops conducted due to being on lockdown; this will most likely impact their analysis for this year. Traffic enforcement has not fully recovered, it started to make some recoveries towards the end of 2020, but the traffic enforcement is still fairly suppressed. Ken Barone anticipates that this will start to correct itself by the last quarter of 2021.

Gary Winfield concluded the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

Next Meeting: April 15th, 2021 2:00-3:30 pm