Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Sentencing Reform Task Force MINUTES

December 8, 2021 / 1:30PM-4:00PM Virtual Meeting

ATTENDEES TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Michael Dougherty, Task Force Co-chair, District Attorney/20th Judicial District Taj Ashaheed, Second Chance Center Maureen Cain, Office of the State Public Defender Christie Donner, Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition Julie Gonzales, State Senator/Senate District 34 Kristen Hilkey, Adult Parole Board Kazi Houston, Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center Jessica Jones, Defense Attorney Sarah Keck, Court Services/Judicial Branch Brian Mason, District Attorney/17th Judicial District Andrew Matson, Colorado CURE Greg Mauro, Denver Division of Community Corrections Tom Raynes, Colorado District Attorneys' Council Michael Rourke, District Attorney/19th Judicial District Dan Rubinstein, District Attorney/21st Judicial District Glenn Tapia, Director, Div. of Probation Services/Judicial Branch Dean Williams, Colorado Department of Corrections

GUESTS

STAFF

Richard Stroker, CCJJ Consultant Jack Reed, Interim Research Director, Division of Criminal Justice Laurence Lucero, Sentencing Reform Task Force Staff, Division of Criminal Justice Stephane Waisanen, Sentence Structure Working Group Staff, Division of Criminal Justice Kevin Ford, Commission Staff, Division of Criminal Justice

ABSENT

Terri Carver, State Representative/House District 20 Valerie Finks, Victim Compensation Program/DA Office, 1st Judicial District Bob Gardner, State Senator/Senate District 12 Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez, State Representative/House District 4 Henry Jackson, Metro State University Rick Kornfeld, *TF Co-chair*/Defense Attorney Heather McClure, Adams County Division of Community Safety & Well-Being Lisa Wayne, Defense Attorney

Welcome & Agenda	Discussion
Welcome, Approval of Minutes,	Michael Dougherty welcomed attendees and noted that Co-chair Rick Kornfeld
and Agenda	would be absent due to a work conflict. Additional known absentees included
Michael Dougherty,	Valarie Finks and Representative Terri Carver. Michael introduced the newest
Task Force Co-chair	member of the Task Force, elected District Attorney (DA) Brian Mason from the
	17 th Judicial District (JD) who was replacing Jeff Chostner, DA/19 th JD.
	Members moved and seconded the approval of the November 10, 2021 minutes, which were unanimously approved. Michael reviewed the agenda, explaining that Glenn Tapia would offer an update and a recommendation presentation from the Sentencing Alternatives/Decisions & Probation Working Group. Michael added that he would provide the update from the Sentence Structure Working Group.

Issue/Topic	Discussion
Update: Sentencing	Sentencing Alternatives/Decisions & Probation Working Group
Alternatives/Decisions & Probation	<u>Update</u> . Glenn Tapia reminded Task Force members that the Working Group
Working Group	presented five proposals at the last meeting, two of which were successfully
&	forwarded to the full Commission. The Task Force returned the other three
Presentation: Rec. FY22-SR #05	proposals with accompanying feedback and concerns with the expectation of
Glenn Tapia, WG Leader	further work by the Working Group. With revisions having been completed,
	Glenn explained that he would "re-present" one of these three proposals for a
	vote by the Task Force. As for the other two recommendations, one will
	undergo major revisions and be submitted to the Task Force during 2022, and
	the Working Group will return to the "drawing board" on the third proposal.
	Glenn added that Working Group members have requested time on the next
	Task Force meeting agenda to clarify the scope of work for the Working Group.
	Presentation. Recommendation FY22-SR #05. Individualized Behavioral Health Responses to Probation Violations [Statutory].
	The recommendation was previously presented at the November 10 Task Force
	meeting and the requested revisions of the recommendation have been
	completed. Task Force members Maureen Cain and Michael Rourke had
	provided to the Working Group revisions of several provisions in the proposed
	statutory language. By way of re-introduction, Glenn summarized that existing
	law is rather punitive and limiting for people who test positive for drugs on
	probation by restricting probation response options that fail to acknowledge
	the challenges of behavioral health problems and the reality of the treatment
	process. The first version of this recommendation was modeled after <i>Senate</i>
	<i>Bill 2019-108. Juvenile Justice Reform</i> , which uses intermediate behavioral
	responses to probation violations.
	Glenn reviewed the modifications:
	• There were concerns at the last meeting about the language describing the
	limits of the arrest powers for Probation officers. The Working Group agreed
	with those concerns and offered new statutory language under section §16-
	11-205, C.R.S., Arrest of probationer revocation. The new language includes a

Issue/Topic Update: Sentencing Alternatives/Decisions & Probation	provision allowing for arrest by a probation officer if any offense under state law that is statutorily eligible for arrest has been or is being committed by the probationer in the officer's presence.
Working Group & Presentation: Rec. FY22-SR #05 <i>Glenn Tapia, WG Leader</i> (continued)	• The Working Group agreed with and modified the recommendation regarding a second general concern that the proposal was overly detailed for statute and that some probation processes would be better addressed in Probation Standards, rather than in statute.
	 Glenn noted that the Working Group subsequently will propose a policy recommendation focused on these probation process provisions that were deleted from this statutory recommendation.
	• The Working Group provided revised language to address the third area of feedback that requested clarification of situations when a summons is preferred, rather than an arrest warrant in cases of probation revocations. Maureen added that the revisions did not change the original concepts but simply improved the statements by eliminating inconsistencies in the proposed statutory language.
	• Glenn, referencing Maureen's comment, explained that the proposal simplifies language that, in a revocation, a probation officer will choose a summons over a warrant, unless certain provisions for making a warranted arrest are indicated.
	 Additional edits replaced gender-specific pronouns that previously always referred to probation officers as "he."
	• One phrase was still pending regarding whether a probation officer could arrest a probationer when circumstances only involved potential harm to self. Kazi Houston clarified that an arrest under circumstances only involving potential "harm to self" had raised concerns for behavioral health representatives on the Working Group. They felt arresting individuals in a mental health crisis criminalized their situation.
	Questions and Comments
	• Maureen Cain offered an amendment to the language in §16-11-205, C.R.S., Arrest of probationer revocation. The substitution can be found below in bold at the end of the paragraph:
	(d) (e) The officer He has probable cause to believe that the conditions of probation have been violated and probable cause to believe that the probationer is leaving or about to leave the state, or that the probationer will fail or refuse to appear before the court to answer charges of violation of the conditions of probation, or that the arrest of the probationer is necessary to protect the safety of any [option: other] person or the community prevent physical harm to the probationer or another person or the commission of a crime; or
	[Note: Inclusion of the word, "other," means an individual should not be arrested for potential harm only to self. Exclusion of the word, "other" means one may be arrested for potential "harm to self." That an arrest must occur as a necessity to protect the safety of other persons or the community is not in question.]
	• Dan asked Maureen why a probation officer should not be allowed to protect the safety of the defendant themselves. She replied that this is a behavioral

Issue/Topic	health issue. Glenn added that according to stakeholder feedback a person's
Update: Sentencing Alternatives/Decisions & Probation Working Group & Presentation: Rec. FY22-SR #05 <i>Glenn Tapia, WG Leader</i> (continued)	mental health crisis should not be solved by the criminal justice system. In other words, jail is not a good option for those suffering a behavioral health crisis. Maureen pointed out that the amendment matched current law in §16-4-103 (3)(a) C.R.S., Setting and selection type of bond—criteria. Dan described that the existing language actually does not include the word "other." Maureen acknowledged Dan's observation, noting that the Working Group had included "other," due to members' concern regarding the criminalization of those suffering a mental health crisis.
	 Tom stated that this would depart from current law, and would represent language that was previously rejected at the legislature, in no small part due to the opposition by District Attorneys.
	• Glenn proposed striking the word "other" but keeping the issue "on the table" to allow Dr. Abigail Tucker to express her concerns to the Commission, assuming the recommendation will be approved and submitted to the Commission.
	 Christie Donner preferred that the word "other" remain and asked whether the Task Force might conduct a simple "straw poll" to assess the mood of the Task Force. Dan added that, for transparency's sake, he would oppose the recommendation if the word "other" is included. If the word "other" is passed onto the Commission merely as an option, he would like the results of the straw poll shared with the Commission. Michael called for a straw poll and the results were as follows: Straw Poll: Preference regarding "other" 7 votes - Include "other" [no arrest for potential self-harm] 7 votes - Do not include "other" [allow arrest for potential self-harm] 1 vote - Abstain
ACTION Recommendation FY22-SR #05 was approved and will be forwarded to the full Commission.	The Task Force agreed to share the poll result with the Commission, noting the split opinion. Task Force members felt comfortable voting on the recommendation itself, even with the "other" issue unresolved.
	Michael asked for any additional feedback or suggestions from the Task Force and, hearing none, called for any public comment on the recommendation. Hearing none, the recommendation was moved and seconded and, with no further discussion, members voted, yielding the following result:
	 VOTE: Recommendation FY22-SR #05. Implement Individualized Behavioral Responses to Probation Violations (Statutory) 15 Support 0 Do not support 1 Abstain
	Rec. FY22-SR #05 was approved for submission to the Commission. Glenn will provide the preliminary presentation of the recommendation and describe the straw poll results at the next Commission meeting [December 10, 2021].

Issue/Topic	Discussion
Update: Sentence Structure	Sentence Structure Working Group
Working Group Michael Dougherty, WG Leader	Michael summarized the ongoing efforts of the Sentence Structure Working Group across three areas of work: the "Clean Up" bill pertaining to misdemeanor offenses, revision of the POWPO statute (Possession of Weapon by Previous Offender), and General Felony Sentencing and Offenses. Regarding the General Felony work, an outline of the progress and decisions made to date and a preview of recommendation elements will be presented.
	<u>"Clean Up" Bill</u> Michael referenced the previous misdemeanor and petty offense phase of work that resulted in <i>Senate Bill 2021-271</i> with implementation delayed until March 2022. The implementation delay allowed the identification of gaps, omissions and/or mistakes in an extraordinarily detailed 350-page bill. Because a number of crimes were shifted from a petty offense to a civil infraction, there were several necessary technical changes that were overlooked. This and other similar technical issues are non-controversial requiring a "clean-up" revisions that will not be forwarded through the Commission process, but will be collected and drafted by various agencies and stakeholders.
	Possession of Weapon Previous Offender (POWPO) An area that will be drafted as a Commission recommendation will address Possession of Weapon by a Previous Offender (POWPO). POWPO previously resulted in prosecution of anyone with a previous felony conviction who was found in possession of a firearm. Last year, statute was revised to limit that list of any previous felony offenses, consistent with other states, to felonies with a public safety impact. Upon further review, there are additional felony offenses that should be added to that list. The Working Group has collaborated with Ceasefire Colorado and other stakeholders on this list of additional offenses.
	Another change in S.B. 21-271 was to add Second Degree Burglary of a Dwelling to the list of Victim Rights Act (VRA) offenses which would require prison for someone who uses or threatens the use of a firearm in that second offense.
	Michael concluded by saying that, once finalized, the Working Group will present a POWPO recommendation to the Task Force. Because this is a substantive change and not a technical "clean-up" item, it will be formally presented to the Task Force and subsequently (if agreed upon) to the Commission for approval. Hearing no questions, he continued the update.
	<u>General Felony Sentencing and Offenses</u> Michael thanked the CCJJ staff and Working Group members for meeting document preparation, including <i>Overview and Status Update: Clarity in</i> <i>Sentencing for General Felonies</i> and for the work by Linda Harrison (DCJ) on prison population analyses for different sentence range scenarios. Michael requested that Task Force members read the document after the current meeting in preparation for the SRTF meeting next month. Michael explained that the work to build more certainty and clarity in sentencing, would not have been possible without the significant contributions and feedback from

Issue/Topic Update: Sentence Structure Working Group	numerous stakeholder groups. The <i>Overview</i> memo captured the task timeline of the Working Group and an overview of the upcoming proposal to address general felony sentencing and offenses. He reviewed these major points of the
Michael Dougherty, WG Leader (continued)	memo:
	Working Group Timeline
	• Phase 1: (Completed) Misdemeanor and petty offense statute revision. <i>Recommendation FY21-SR #01. Revise Misdemeanor Sentencing</i> was the source for <i>Senate Bill 2021-271. Misdemeanor Reform</i> which passed during the 2021 legislative session with delayed implementation in March 2022.
	• Phase 2: (In progress) Felony statute revision focused on "general felonies" for introduction in 2022 legislative session (with delayed implementation until March 2024). If approved, revisions of the existing drug offenses grid would be required. "General felonies" refer to crimes that are not violent crimes or sex offenses.
	• Phase 3: (Future) Felony statute revision focused on violent crimes and sex offenses for introduction in the 2023 legislative session (with delayed implementation until March 2024).
	Summary of General Felony Revisions
	• General felony categories and offenses. Five felony levels (rather than the current six levels) are proposed, specifically, GF1 to GF5, with GF5 being the least serious (<i>Note: There are no current "general felonies" categorized as an F1</i>). Each level includes a presumptive range and an aggravated range. As a general rule, current crimes are being assigned to the respective level in the proposed five-level grid (for example, current F2s assigned to GF1, current F3s assigned to GF2, etc.).
	• Clarity in length of stay. "Good time" would be eliminated* and there would be a 10-day/per month cap on earned time, ensuring a consistent amount of time being served by individuals across the state. [* "Good time" is a statutorily-determined percentage reduction in the amount of time served, namely a 25% or 50% reduction in the sentence served, depending on the seriousness of the offense.]
	• Parole and other transition options. Proposed parole periods are delineated (GF1 & GF2: two years; GF3 & 4: 1 year; and GF5: 9 months, if serving an "aggravated" GF5 sentence). Still under review are options to expand the programs and placements available for qualified inmates to transition to the community prior to release to parole.
	• Parole violations. The consequences for technical parole violations (i.e., violations of parole rules) are described primarily to be administered in the community, rather than through a return to prison. A new crime conviction while on parole would require a mandatory sentence with aggravation.
	• General felony grid. The proposed grid would comprise the five felony levels (mentioned above) and the presumptive and aggravated sentence ranges. These sentence ranges are still under review and analysis.

Issue/Topic	\circ The goal is to reduce current sentence <i>ranges</i> to reflect the current
Update: Sentence Structure	sentences actually applied and the actual time served, which will afford
Working Group	greater clarity in sentencing at the "front end."
Michael Dougherty, WG Leader	\circ Sentence and length of stay data from the CO Department of Corrections
(continued)	and analyses by DCJ are under review to ensure that changes in
	sentencing ranges would avoid prison population increases and to ensure
	fair and appropriate sentences.
	\circ Although the effort to "tighten" sentence ranges may seem to suggest
	that sentences will be reduced, the new ranges will not shorten or
	lengthen the average time served in prison. The new sentence ranges will
	be "calibrated" to reflect current sentences and actual time served by
	eliminating overly broad ranges that can result in extreme sentence
	outliers and sentencing inconsistencies.
	\circ Also, discussions and deliberations are still ongoing to address the
	complex issue of habitual sentencing.
	\circ An example graph reflecting tentative sentence-range scenarios was
	provided displaying the minimal impact of the scenarios on prison
	population.
	• General felony crimes. A 70-page addendum provided a tentative chart of
	the crimes that would be categorized as "general felonies." The chart
	included the following elements: the current crime, the statutory citation,
	the name of the crime, elements of the crime, the number of times the crime
	was filed, the current classification, the proposed classification, the number
	of people sentenced to DOC, and the average LOS for the crime. The chart is
	still under review.
	Michael reiterated that the intent of the current General Felony presentation
	was to provide an overview of the proposal and to explain the work
	accomplished thus far, along with the plan for future work. In two future
	meetings, there will be a preliminary presentation of the complete proposal
	and a final presentation for a vote. Michael solicited fellow Working Group
	members for additional comments.
	DISCUSSION
	Dan Rubenstein noted the Working Group would like to request that Task Force
	members propose potential labels for the category of crimes in the next phase
	of work; namely, the crimes <i>not</i> included among the "General Felonies." He
	added that neither "Violent Crimes" nor "Victim Crimes" accurately captures
	the offenses that will be assigned to that category. Michael shared that the
	term "Enhanced Felonies" had been proposed, although that label was disliked
	by some of the Working Group members. Kazi Houston found the term
	"enhanced" appropriate. Julie Gonzalez suggested using the labels, "Tier 1" and
	"Tier 2" felonies. Dan reminded attendees that the ultimate structure will
	include four categories: General Felonies, Drug Felonies, Sex Felonies, and the
	yet-to-be named set of felonies.
	Kristen Hilkey offered several observations:
	• The proposal essentially eliminates discretionary parole. With incentive for
	early release in mind, she asked to what degree CDOC will have discretion to

Issue/Topic Update: Sentence Structure Working Group	apply the 10 days of earned time. Maureen replied that the issue is still under consideration and that the Working Group had begun discussion of the options with CDOC.
Michael Dougherty, WG Leader (continued)	 In collaboration with the Parole Board, the Robina Institute had recently conducted a study of Parole data and practices that might be informative. Shifting the degree of discretion of CDOC to award/withhold earned time would significantly impact length of stay and consequently, the prison population.
	• Given that a major element to achieve consistency in sentencing appeared to be the elimination of discretionary parole release, she reported that all nine parole board members would be adamantly opposed to that proposition. She asked whether there is evidence-based research to support this approach to the proposed truth-in-sentencing model. Michael replied that the Working Group had not decided whether to eliminate discretionary parole release as part of their proposed model.
	• Referencing the process regarding "parole holds" when a parolee commits a new crime, Kristen felt District Attorneys were inserted incorrectly into the proposed process, which is typically administered by the CDOC.
	• She noted that the shorter parole periods in the proposal would not provide parole officers the time necessary to address parolee's risks and needs. Research shows that effective recidivism reduction is accomplished through interventions that address criminal thinking and other areas related to success in daily life. Shortened parole periods eliminate the opportunity for behavioral interventions conducted while an individual is regaining their footing in the community. Therefore, this proposal will reverse the improvements made in the State system over the last 20 years.
	• She felt that the input from the Parole Board and its members, thus far, had been ignored. She noted that there had been no reaction or questions regarding a research/policy memo provided to the Working Group. She specifically wanted this concern reflected in the record.
	Michael expressed appreciation for Kristen and the Board's input provided over the last several months. Given that the recidivism rate in Colorado ranks at the bottom of the nation, he did not feel Colorado has been successful over the last 20 years in the rehabilitation of those transitioning out of prison. He concurred that Colorado should not continue to lose ground in that ranking and that every Task Force member had an interest in improving on the current situation. Kristen agreed that the criminal justice infrastructure in Colorado is ready for change and that, relatedly, Colorado was recently ranked 50 th in the prevalence of mental illness and the access to care for the adult population in Colorado. ¹ She mentioned that challenges in meeting treatment needs for those on parole leads to technical parole violations. Michael replied that everyone is committed to address these complex problems.
	Dan followed up the previous statement by Kristen regarding DAs and "parole holds." He noted that the recommendation states that a "parole hold" is

¹ See, mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america

Issue/Topic	mandatory, but that a hold may be removed by Parole with consent of the DA.
Update: Sentence Structure	In other words, the parole officer/CDOC would have the option to remove a
Working Group	mandatory hold with DA consentnot that a DA could independently remove a
Michael Dougherty, WG Leader (continued)	hold.
	Regarding "Parole and other transition options," Greg Mauro referenced a phrase in the overview document, "possibly retain the option for people in prison to transition" Did this mean the Working Group was contemplating the elimination of inmate community transition? Michael replied that transition concepts and options were still under discussion. Greg also was intrigued by the phrase, "By 12/31/2022, DOC would develop a comprehensive plan to provide additional transition placements", and asked how this might impact the Sentencing Progression Working Group that was placed on hiatus while awaiting direction from the Task Force. He felt this Working Group had a broad representation of stakeholder voices, including the CDOC that was ready to explore and/or develop transition options. Michael was under the impression that the Sentencing Progression Working Group itself had chosen to suspend its work. Michael added that the recommendation language is tentative, still subject to revision, and merely intended to provide a general update of the status of work by the Working Group and Study Group. Maureen added she would appreciate Greg's input on this specific language.
	Glenn asked for clarification regarding the role of parole and the mechanics of parole supervision, if, as implied by the proposal, revocation to prison for technical violations would be eliminated. Michael replied that such details were under continued deliberation within the certainty-in-sentencing rubric. Maureen added that the group had spoken to Parole about their perceived role, indicating that 80% of their role is to provide support for people as they transition to the community.
	Christie reiterated the ultimate goal of the sentencing reform effort was to allow everyone involved to know what a sentence means, offering multiple examples of all those impacted by the lack of certainty in sentencing. For decades in Colorado, no one has understood what a sentence means in terms of actual time served because discretionary and mandatory parole approaches have been overlaid and also because Colorado provides a large potential 16- month transition-to-community "window" prior to the Parole Eligibility Date. It's nearly impossible for defense attorneys or prosecutors to advise clients and victims regarding the actual time an individual will serve in prison. On the operations side (CDOC and Parole), predictable sentence lengths are critical to planning the right institutional incentives and options in the right volume or dosage to incentivize positive behavior. This also affects reentry preparation, which is also impacted by the degree of certainty regarding release dates and reentry options. The system is not doing an adequate job at all for people with higher reentry needs. Last but not least, it is also critical to avoid an increase in the prison population.
	Taj Ashaheed noted that he works daily with those involved in the current system and that no one should be satisfied with the status quo. He explained

Issue/Topic Update: Sentence Structure Working Group <i>Michael Dougherty, WG Leader</i> (continued)	that, while all of the issues discussed are complicated for the Task Force members and other decision-makers, navigating the reentry options and programs are even more perplexing for people exiting prison. There are extreme gaps in programming for those in the institution and for those transitioning to the community and, yet, he wanted to remind everyone that some still manage to navigate their release successfully without committing new crimes. While "threading the [reentry] needle" is complicated, it is certainly possible.
	Michael requested members' patience while emphasizing that there are still many "moving parts" in the proposal and several ongoing associated discussions. The effort is also challenged to gather feedback and reach consensus with stakeholders quickly due to the tight timeline derived from the impending legislative session.

Issue/Topic	Public Comment
Public Comment	Michael solicited public comment, and, hearing none, moved to the conclusion
Michael Dougherty, WG Leader	of the meeting.
	Conclusion
	Richard Stroker, CCJJ Consultant, thanked Michael and Task Force members for
Next Steps and Adjournment	all the time and effort on this significant work. He summarized that the
Richard Stroker, CCJJ Consultant &	Recommendation approved by the Task Force during the meeting
Michael Dougherty, WG Leader	(Recommendation FY22-SR #05. Implement Individualized Behavioral Responses
	to Probation Violations) will be forwarded to the full Commission for
	preliminary presentation on Friday, December 10, 2021. In addition, the
ACTION	Commission will also hold a final vote on the following two recommendations
Sentencing Reform Task Force will	from the Task Force at that same meeting:
present one recommendation	- Recommendation FY22-SR #01. Define the Purposes of Probation
(FY22-SR #05) for preliminary	- Recommendation FY22-SR #03. Increase Access to Telehealth Services
consideration by the Commission	
on Dec. 10.	Michael thanked everyone again for their attention and efforts, pointing out
	that, although the work is hard, the hard work has great meaning and if it were
ACTION	easy it would have been done a long time ago.
Sentencing Reform Task Force will	
present two recommendations	Michael announced that the December 21, 2021 meeting of the Sentence
(FY22-SR #01 & FY22-SR #03) for	Structure Working Group was canceled. With no further business, Michael
final consideration by the	adjourned the meeting. The next (tentative, extra) meeting of the Sentencing
Commission on Dec. 10.	Reform Task Force is January 5, 2022 at 1:30pm.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 5, 2022 (tentative) / 1:30-4:00pm (Virtual meeting) Wednesday, January 12, 2022 / 1:30-4:00pm (Virtual meeting)

Virtual meeting information will be emailed to members and posted at, colorado.gov/ccjj/ccjj-meetings

[NOTE: The January 5 meeting of the Sentencing Reform Task Force was subsequently canceled.]