



August 15, 2008

PRESS RELEASE

*****For Immediate Release*****

The annual Public Comments Hearing of the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) is scheduled for Tuesday, September 23, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. It will be held in the House Office Building, Judiciary Committee Hearing Room (Room 100) at 84 College Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21401.

Members of the public are invited to address the Commission with their concerns about sentencing issues in Maryland. To accommodate all who wish to participate in the meeting, the Commission requests that each speaker limit his or her comments to five minutes. All who are interested in speaking at the public meeting should contact David Soulé, Executive Director of the Commission, at least three days prior to the meeting, at (301) 403-4165.



THE STATE COMMISSION ON CRIMINAL SENTENCING POLICY

Establishment and Charge of the State Commission

The Maryland General Assembly created the State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (SCCSP) in May 1999, under Chapter 648 of the Laws of Maryland. In July 1999, the SCCSP formally replaced its predecessor advisory commission, the Maryland Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MCCSP). The enabling legislation for the SCCSP set out six legislative goals for sentencing in Maryland, stating that:

1. Sentencing should be fair and proportional and that sentencing policies should reduce unwarranted disparity, including any racial disparity, in sentences for offenders who have committed similar offenses and have similar criminal histories;
2. Sentencing policies should aid citizen understanding of the time that an offender will actually be incarcerated, if any;
3. Sentencing guidelines are voluntary and that it is voluntary for the courts to sentence within the guidelines;
4. Prison capacity and prison usage should give priority to the incarceration of violent and career offenders;
5. Sentencing policies should preserve meaningful judicial discretion in the imposition of sentences and sufficient flexibility to permit individualized sentences; and
6. Sentencing judges in every jurisdiction in the State should be able to impose the most appropriate criminal penalties, including corrections options programs for appropriate offenders.

The SCCSP was designed and authorized with the purpose of fulfilling those legislative intentions.

SCCSP Composition

The SCCSP is composed of the 19 voting and 3 ex officio members listed on the next page. The Chairman, the Honorable Howard S. Chasanow, was appointed by the Governor in June 2007 to lead the State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy.



Current Members of the State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy

Members Appointed by the Governor

Chair

Honorable Howard S. Chasanow, Ret.

State's Attorney

Honorable Leonard C. Collins, Jr.

Criminal Defense Attorney

Richard A. Finci, Esquire

Victims' Advocacy Group

Laura L. Martin, Esquire

Law Enforcement

Chief Marcus L. Brown

Criminal Justice or Corrections Policy Expert

Charles F. Wellford, Ph.D.

Local Detention Center

Major Bernard Foster, Sr.

Public

Paul F. Enzinna, Esq.

Public

James V. Anthenelli, Esquire

Members Appointed by the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of Maryland

Appellate Courts

Honorable Arrie W. Davis

Circuit Court

Honorable John C. Themelis

District Court

Honorable John P. Morrissey

Members Appointed by the President of the Senate

Senator

Honorable Lisa A. Gladden

Senator

Honorable Delores G. Kelley

Members Appointed by the Speaker of the House

Delegate

Honorable Curtis S. Anderson

Delegate

Honorable Joseph F. Vallario, Jr.

Ex-Officio Members

Attorney General

Honorable Douglas F. Gansler

State Public Defender

Nancy S. Forster, Esq.

Secretary of Public Safety & Correctional Services

Gary D. Maynard