Hamilton County

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January 16, 2007

MOTION

We **MOVE** that Hamilton County initiate the creation of the Hamilton County Criminal Justice Commission, the purpose and structure of which are described in the attached document.

Pat DeWine
Commissioner

David Pepper
Vice President

Todd Portune
President

THE HAMILTON COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

BACKGROUND

The first of Vera Institute's recommendations in its July 31, 2006 report was to form an ongoing Criminal Justice Commission to oversee all issues of criminal justice and corrections in a comprehensive and transparent way. Equally importantly, this group would have some very important near-term tasks to accomplish out of the gate, including:

1) make specific recommendations as to the "processes" and "practices" improvements and reforms that need to be undertaken as we pursue any new corrections system (building off the initial Vera findings)

2) assess the menu of options available for diversion/alternative/reentry programs that are available in Hamilton County today and the system's overall effectiveness and coordination, and--based on that assessment as well as national best practices/research, recommend changes going forward to enhance the effectiveness of this system of programs, lower recidivism and reduce crime.

In the long-term, this group can take on the broader role outlined by the Vera Institute in its report and described below.

PURPOSE OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

To evaluate, monitor and make appropriate recommendations to the public, and to local and county elected officials and public safety officials, on laws, policies and practices that promote public safety, reduce recidivism and improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the County's criminal justice system. The Commission should employ a comprehensive approach to developing and maintaining a criminal justice system that improves public safety, increases offender accountability, and improves recidivism and prevention. Recommendations should be based on data analysis and evidence-based practices.

COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

Chair: Chairs commission meetings, has one vote
Selected by County Commissioners, two-year term
Nominee: Retired Judge Nathaniel Jones

Staffing: Vera Institute
County, John Bruggen (Office of Budget and Strategic Initiatives)

Criminal Justice Commission (18 members, each with one vote)

The Vera recommendations make clear that the involvement of and coordination among elected leaders is essential. With that in mind, the proposed structure is for18 permanent members of the Commission:

3 County Commissioners (select, among the three, the vice chair of commission, to preside in absence of chair)
- *Todd Portune*
- *David Pepper*
- *Pat DeWine*

County Sheriff
- *Simon Leis*

County Prosecutor
- *Joe Deters*

County Coroner
- *O'dell Owens*

Mayor, Cincinnati
- *Mark Mallory*

Local Elected Official, non-Cincinnati (selected by County Commissioners, two-year term)
- **Nominee**: *Dan Brooks*, North College Hill

Cincinnati Chief of Police
- *Tom Streicher*

Hamilton County Public Defender
- *Lou Strigari*

Five judges: (selected by County Commissioners, two-year terms)
- Common Pleas (2)
- Municipal Court (2)
- Juvenile Court (1)

Three at-large community representatives (selected by County Commissioners, two-year terms)

Standing Committee Members:

The Commission will oversee a set number of standing committees. Standing Committees are required to have a commission member serve as the chair, but membership will include noncommission members as appropriate. Standing Committees are required to report and make recommendations to the Commission. The adoption of any recommendation submitted by the Standing Committees will require a majority vote of the Commission. Standing Committees will have the authority to utilize workgroups of practitioners with specific areas of expertise, as needed.

While the Commission will ultimately determine the Standing Committees purposes and makeup, committees might include:

- *Program Evaluation Committee*: provides an ongoing assessment of treatment and other diversion programs in use today, and applies best practices to recommend improvements and new approaches
- *Probation Committee*: analyzes and assesses probation practices in the County, and recommends improvements that will improve overcrowding and reduce recidivism and crime
- *Policy and Structure Committee*: analyzes the various processes and overall structure of the County criminal justice system, including recommendations on pre-trial assessment, community punishment options, specialized courts, etc.
- *Reentry Committee*: analyzes the reentry circumstances and processes faced by offenders as they end their incarceration and reenter the community, with the goal being to reduce recidivism

The standing committee members would bring multiple disciplines to bear on the questions and issues to be addressed. They also will provide critical outreach to different constituency groups. The County Commission, Criminal Justice Commission, and Administration can finalize the Standing Committees, and their makeup, in the coming weeks.

REQUIREMENTS

The Commission shall issue regular public reports providing information based on data analysis relating to public safety, incarceration, probation, reentry and other trends—and making recommendations on suggested reforms and improvements.

The Commission shall submit an *annual report* to the public setting forth recommendations and/or policy modifications. In addition, the annual report shall contain an analysis of the criminal justice structure, data, and practices for the previous year.

Key Tasks of the Commission will also be:

1. Garnering sound, comprehensive data on the County's criminal justice system is fundamental to lowering recidivism and improving the system's effectiveness. The Commission will need to play a role in:
    a. Identifying the sources of critical criminal justice data (i.e. prisoner and offender population, probation, corrections, sentencing);
    b. Constructing a list of variables required to construct the database;
    c. Identifying barriers for data sharing or collection;
    d. Developing an action plan to coordinate data collection and dissemination among key criminal justice agency.

2. Analyze and make recommendations regarding current probation policies and procedures
    a. Conduct a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the probation system;
    b. Make recommendations regarding offender programs, supervision caseload and alternatives to violation;
    c. Study the impact of violation policies on recidivism.

3. Develop a Risk-Needs Assessment tool
    a. Review and evaluate appropriate risk-need assessments tools to be used for offenders.
    b. Identify critical points at which to utilize the risk-needs assessment;
    c. Select, train and implement the risk-needs assessment tool;
    d. Evaluate the tool's impact on recidivism and jail population levels.

4. Review and develop a continuum of community based punishment options
    a. Identify and evaluate current community based punishment options;
    b. Identify best-practices nationwide to address recidivism;
    c. Evaluate programs for effectiveness and impact on recidivism;
    d. Recommend a core continuum of community based punishments for offenders receiving nonprison sentences.

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January 24, 2007

MOTION

We **MOVE** that the following individuals be appointed to two-year terms to the Hamilton County Criminal Justice Commission.

Todd Portune

David Pepper

Pat DeWine

COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

Chair: *Nominee*: Retired Judge Nathaniel Jones

3 County Commissioners (select, among the three, the vice chair of commission, to preside in absence of chair)
- *Todd Portune*
- *David Pepper*
- *Pat DeWine*

County Sheriff
- *Simon Leis*

County Prosecutor
- *Joe Deters*

County Coroner
- *O'dell Owens*

Mayor, Cincinnati
- *Mark Mallory*

Cincinnati Chief of Police
- *Tom Streicher*

+ Dan Brooks - Mayor, N. College Hill

Hamilton County Public Defender
- *Lou Strigari*

Five judges: (selected by County Commissioners, two-year terms)
- Common Pleas (2): ***Nominees: Judge John West, Judge Bill Mallory***
- *Municipal Court (2): **Nominees: Judge Julie Stautberg, Judge Nadine Allen***
- *Juvenile Court (1): **Nominee: Judge Karla Grady***

Three at-large community representatives (selected by County Commissioners, two-year terms): ***Nominees*:**
- ***Walter Smitson***
- ***Rev. James Pankey, President, Baptist Ministers Conference***
- ***Eric Avner***

Standing Committee Members:

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The standing committee members would bring multiple disciplines to bear on the questions and issues to be addressed. They also will provide critical outreach to different constituency groups. In searching for members of the Commission, numerous individuals have been recommended or offered to participate in its work. I recommend that the Commission/Administration invite the

following individuals to take part in its work through Standing Committees.

- *Ernie McAdams, City Prosecutor*
- *Cecil Thomas, Cincinnati City Council*
- *Joe Schmitz, Director of Corrections*
- *Jerry Campbell, Hamilton County Court Administrator*
- *Michael Walton, Court Administrator*
- *Wendy Niehaus, Pretrial Services*
- *Dr. Pat VanVoorhis, University of Cincinnati Criminal Justice Program*
- *John Norwine, Director, Cincinnati Bar Association (former President of pretrial services)*
- *Rick Roberts (or a representative), Jobs & Family Services*
- *Patrick Tribbe or Diana Mcintosh - HC Mental Health and Recovery Board*
- *Portia Cox Walker, Parole Representative*
- *Mike Allen, attorney, former prosecutor*
- *Frank Yux, treatment services*
- *David Singleton, Ohio Justice and Policy Center*
- *Robert Biddle, retired Police Captain*
- *Georgine Ghetty, Homeless Coalition*
- *Gwen Robinson, Community Action Agency*
- *Donna Jones Stanley, Urban League*
- *Steve McConnell, Cincinnati Union Bethel*
- *Neil Tilow, Talbert House*
- *John Young, Freestore/Foodbank and former Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Director*
- *Rick Tripp, Architect, MSA*
- *Rick Siegel, Citizen Complaint Authority*
- *Representative, Hamilton County Police Assoc. Rep.*

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- *Policy and Structure Committee: analyzes the various processes and overall structure of the County criminal justice system, including recommendations on pre-trial assessment, community punishment options, specialized courts, etc.*
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