

# **Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (SPAC)**

**Organizational Meeting  
Tuesday, January 19, 2010  
3:00 to 4:30 p.m.**

**Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)  
300 West Adams Street, Suite 700  
Chicago, Illinois 60606**

Members present: Joseph Birkett, Will Burns, Jack Cutrone (ex-officio), Gino DiVito, Michael Hood, Jeff Howard, Nick Kondelis (ex-officio), Michael Pelletier, Kwame Raoul, Alan Spellberg, Michael Tardy (on behalf of Cynthia Cobbs)

Members via phone: Jim Durkin, John Millner, Jorge Montes (ex-officio)

Members absent: Michael Randle (ex-officio)

Non-members: Peter Baroni, Lisa Braude (phone), Mary Ann Dyar, Mark Myrent, Maggie Peck (phone), Jerry Stermer, Alison Shames (phone), Christine Devitt Westley, Paula Wolff

## **Purposes:**

- Finalize membership of SPAC
- Review purpose of SPAC
- NOTE: Seven members must be elected by the direct appointments, so this first meeting will not have full attendance.

## **Welcome and Introduction**

Jerry Stermer, Chief of Staff from the Governor's Office, made brief welcoming remarks to the members assembled on behalf of the Governor. He stressed the importance of the work of the Sentencing Policy Advisory Council as a matter of public safety and public policy. He noted that the Governor's appointee to SPAC, Justice Gino DiVito, is prepared to act as temporary chair until a permanent chair is elected by the members. He thanked everyone for their commitment, energy and resources, and thanked the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority for hosting the meeting. ICJIA is also the administrative home for SPAC.

Alan Spellberg made the motion to name Justice DiVito the temporary chair of SPAC, which was seconded by John Millner and passed unanimously.

## **Discussion: Legislative History and Charge to SPAC**

Justice DiVito noted that the primary purpose of the meeting was to appoint additional members to SPAC per the statute. He offered a brief history of the SPAC legislation, highlighting the role that the CLEAR (Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform) Commission played. The CLEAR Initiative addressed confusion in the Illinois Criminal Code by editing, simplifying and consolidating the Code and attendant case law. The members of the CLEAR Commission voted unanimously to continue their work to review the sentencing elements of the Code of Corrections, as well. In the process, they came to understand the need for a central entity to bring different sources of publicly available criminal justice data together for the objective analysis of sentencing trends.

CLEAR Commissioner Justice Michael Toomin chaired a subcommittee that researched other states' sentencing structures, resulting in legislation creating the Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council. SPAC's primary responsibility is to gather information to aid the Governor and General Assembly in sentencing matters, working in tandem with the entities created by the Crime Reduction Act. Justice DiVito noted the role of Paula Wolff and Chicago Metropolis 2020 in establishing the CLEAR Initiative, and recognized the work of Peter Baroni as CLEAR Director. Pete Baroni provided further explanation of the intent, purpose and duties of SPAC included in statute.

Alison Shames, Associate Director of the Center on Sentencing and Corrections with the Vera Institute of Justice, explained Vera's role as a technical assistance provider to CLEAR and SPAC. She talked about Vera's work in other states with sentencing commissions, describing the types of issues they address and how they inform policy making, e.g., through prison population projections, impact statements, policy recommendations, and program evaluations. She discussed the importance of having a proactive, experienced executive director, with support from research staff, to be effective.

### **Selection of Members**

Justice DiVito noted that SPAC is comprised of 11 members designated by statute, five ex-officio members designated by statute and seven member selections from designated categories. Bios of the recommended members were included in the meeting packets. The nominations for the two positions of retired judges – Justice Thomas Callum and Judge Warren Wolfson – were made by Justice DiVito, seconded by Joseph Birkett and passed unanimously. The nomination for criminal justice academic researcher – David Yellen – was made by Justice DiVito, seconded by Kwame Raoul and Alan Spellberg, and passed unanimously. The nomination for victim representative – Ronald Holt – was made by Alan Spellberg, seconded by Kwame Raoul and passed unanimously. The nomination for sheriff – Sheriff Tom Dart – was made by Joseph Birkett, seconded by Michael Hood and passed unanimously. The nomination for representative of a community-based organization – Reverend Patricia Watkins – was made by John Millner, seconded by Will Burns and passed unanimously. The nomination for local law enforcement representative – Colonel William Clay – was made by Joseph Birkett, seconded by Alan Spellberg and passed unanimously.

### **Selection of Next Meeting Date & Other Business**

The next meeting date was scheduled for Monday, March 8, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. All members were encouraged to be there in-person; however, accommodations will be made for members to call in, if necessary. A larger meeting room at a central location will be secured, e.g., at the James R. Thompson Center.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

(Minutes approved by SPAC members on March 8, 2010.)