

Public Comments Hearing - Minutes

December 8, 2009

# Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy 2009 Public Comments Hearing

House Office Building Annapolis, MD 21041 December 8, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

#### **Minutes**

### **Commission Members in Attendance:**

Honorable Howard S. Chasanow, Chair Delegate Curt S. Anderson James V. Anthenelli, Esquire Shannon E. Avery, Esquire Chief Marcus L. Brown Leonard C. Collins, Jr., Esquire Honorable Arrie W. Davis

Paul F. Enzinna, Esquire

Richard A. Finci, Esquire

Major Bernard B. Foster, Sr.

Senator Lisa A. Gladden

Senator Delores G. Kelley

Patrick Kent, Esquire, representing Elizabeth Julian, Esquire

Laura L. Martin, Esquire

Secretary Gary D. Maynard

Honorable John P. Morrissey

Delegate Joseph F. Vallario, Jr.

Charles F. Wellford, Ph.D.

#### **Staff Members in Attendance:**

Eric Dunton Jessica A. Rider David Soulé, Ph.D.

## **Visitors:**

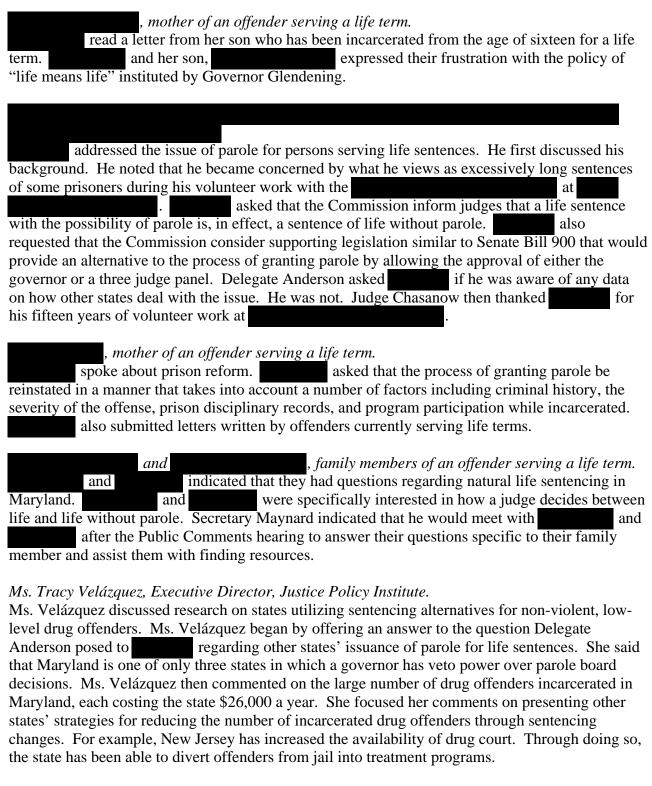
Chief Judge Robert M. Bell Claire Rossmark, Department of Legislative Services

The Public Comments Hearing began at 6:30 p.m. when Judge Chasanow called the hearing to order. He explained that the Public Comments Hearing is held annually to provide an opportunity for the public to bring issues before the Commission or to comment on issues previously addressed by the Commission. Judge Chasanow asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves and then he welcomed the speakers to the podium.



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Delegate Anderson asked Ms. Velázquez how to convince policy makers that treatment programs actually save taxpayers' money. She answered that other states have quantified their savings as a way of making the benefits of treatment programs tangible. For instance, California and New Jersey have been able to close prison wings and consolidate prisons through diverting drug offenders to treatment programs. Delegate Anderson asked how to differentiate between drug users

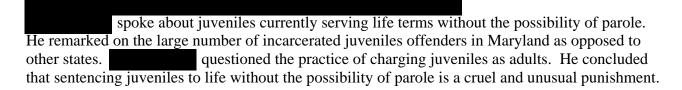


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and drug dealers. Ms. Velázquez responded that some jurisdictions have created drug sellers' court as a way to wean offenders off drug dealing by giving them employment and other opportunities.

Judge Morrissey asked how to streamline the drug court process in order to make the process available to a greater number of offenders. Ms. Velázquez noted Hawaii's Project Hope as an example of a sentencing alternative that expends fewer judicial resources than drug court. The project offers probation with drug treatment coupled with short term jail sentences or "flash incarceration" for violations.



Judge Chasanow again thanked all of the speakers for attending and voicing their concerns. Judge Chasanow asked if there were any additional speakers present who wished to address the Commission. Noting no additional requests to speak, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.