



November 15, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The annual public comments hearing of the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP or Commission) is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.** The hearing will be conducted via videoconference.

The MSCCSP has approved tentatively,¹ pending public input, certain [amendments](#) to the cell ranges of the existing Sentencing Matrices for Drug Offenses and Property Offenses. The MSCCSP invites public comment on those changes, or any other issue related to criminal sentencing policy during the MSCCSP annual public comments hearing. A video presentation explaining the process of amending the guidelines is available [HERE](#).

Those who wish to speak at the hearing should [register](#) in advance. Instructions for participation in the videoconference will be provided upon registration approval. To accommodate all who wish to participate in the meeting, the MSCCSP requests that each speaker limits their comments to five minutes. The MSCCSP should receive written public comment regarding the tentative amendments by no later than December 6, 2021. Please email written testimony to David Soulé, Executive Director of the Commission, at dsoule@umd.edu.

Registration is necessary only for those who wish to speak at the public hearing. Those who wish to simply observe may view the livestream via the MSCCSP YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJFolqWsKjk>.

¹ The Commission's By-Laws permit it, among other things, to approve a proposed action, subject to receiving public comment (after notice).



Establishment and Charge of the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy

The Maryland General Assembly created the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) in May 1999. In July 1999, the MSCCSP formally replaced its predecessor advisory commission, the Maryland Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy. The governing legislation for the MSCCSP, located in Subtitle 2 of Title 6 of the Criminal Procedure Article of the Code of Maryland (Statutes) sets out six legislative goals for sentencing in Maryland, expressing the General Assembly's intention that:

- (1) sentencing should be fair and proportional and that sentencing policies should reduce unwarranted disparity, including any racial disparity, in sentences for criminals who have committed similar crimes and have similar criminal histories;
- (2) sentencing policies should help citizens to understand how long a criminal will be confined;
- (3) sentencing policies should preserve meaningful judicial discretion and sufficient flexibility to allow individualized sentences;
- (4) sentencing guidelines be voluntary;
- (5) the priority for the capacity and use of correctional facilities should be the confinement of violent and career criminals; and
- (6) sentencing judges in the State should be able to impose the most appropriate criminal penalties, including corrections options programs for appropriate criminals.

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

MSCCSP Composition

The MSCCSP is composed of the 19 members. The Chair, the Honorable Brett R. Wilson was appointed by Governor Hogan in September 2019.



Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy Membership

Members Appointed by the Governor

Chair

Honorable Brett R. Wilson

State's Attorney

Robert H. Harvey, Jr., Esq.

Criminal Defense Attorney

Richard A. Finci, Esq.

Victims' Advocacy Group

Alethea Miller

Law Enforcement

Chief Douglas DeLeaver

Criminal Justice or Corrections Policy Expert

Brian D. Johnson, Ph.D.

Local Detention Center

Melinda C. Grenier

Public

Kyle E. Scherer, Esq.

Public

Lisa M. Spicknall-Horner

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

Appellate Courts

Honorable James P. Salmon

Circuit Court

Honorable Shannon E. Avery

District Court

Honorable Patrice E. Lewis

Members Appointed by the President of the Senate

Senator

Honorable Charles E. Sydnor, III

Senator

Honorable Christopher R. West

Members Appointed by the Speaker of the House

Delegate

Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett

Delegate

Honorable David Moon

Ex-Officio Members

Attorney General

Honorable Brian E. Frosh

State Public Defender

Paul B. DeWolfe, Esq.

Secretary of Public Safety & Correctional Services

Robert L. Green