



# District of Columbia Sentencing Commission

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## MINUTES OF FULL COMMISSION MEETING

September 19, 2017

One Judiciary Square, Suite 430S, Washington, DC 20001

### **Voting Members in Attendance:**

Frederick Weisberg	Renata K. Cooper
David Rosenthal	Julie Samuels
Milton Lee	Molly Gill
Danya Dyson	Laura Hankins

### **Non-Voting Members in Attendance:**

Chanell Autrey

### **Staff in Attendance:**

Barbara Tombs-Souvey	Mehmet Ergun	Taylor Tarnalicki
Mia Hebb	Linden Fry	

- I. Chairman Weisberg called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.
- II. The minutes from July 18, 2017, were discussed and approved.
- III. Overview of National Association of Sentencing Commission (NASC) Conference—Informational Item, Chairman Weisberg and Barbara Tombs-Souvey.

**NASC Conference:** Chairman Weisberg gave a brief overview of the 2017 NASC Conference held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Chairman Weisberg noted that he was pleased with the Commission’s presentation on the Guidelines Data Evaluation Study. In addition, Ms. Tombs-Souvey stated that there was robust discussion during the conference regarding the appropriate uses of Risk Assessments tools at sentencing.

- IV. Proposed Research Plan for Survey and Focus Groups – Action Item, Taylor Tarnalicki and Barbara Tombs-Souvey.

**Proposed Research Plan:** Taylor Tarnalicki presented on the Commission’s proposed research plan to “Seek input from Judges, Prosecutors, and Defense Attorneys regarding their use and perception of the Guidelines.” Soliciting such input was the priority Guidelines Data Evaluation Study’s recommendation chosen by the Commission.

The presentation included a timeline for the project, and highlighted all the major steps that Commission staff will undertake to complete the project. These steps included:

- Developing and implementing a Guidelines survey

- Conducting focus groups
- Summarizing the findings of both survey and focus group data
  - The summary will be reviewed and discussed by the Commission
- Publishing a Final Report
  - The report will review the projects methods
  - Include a list of potential Guidelines modifications agreed upon by Commission members

There were several concerns and questions from Commission members regarding the types of demographic questions that will be included in of the survey. Members also discussed the survey's timeline. Ms. Tarnalicki stated that a draft of the survey will be presented to the Commission for review and discussion prior to its implementation. It is projected that the final report, approved by the Commission, will be released between June 2019 and September 2019.

Ms. Tarnalicki informed Commission members of the estimated cost of the project based on the cost of contracting with a vendor to conduct the focus groups and analyze the resulting data. Ms. Tarnalicki stated that after, contacting several research firms, the estimated cost range would range between \$60,000 and \$90,000.

V. Logistics of Criminal History Retreat – Informational Item, Mia Hebb.

***Criminal History Retreat:*** Ms. Hebb gave an overview of possible venue locations and estimated cost for the Criminal History Retreat on November 14, 2017. There were several comments and recommendations from Commission members regarding various venues. Ms. Hebb informed the Commission members of the limited availability and fast approaching retreat date in order to secure a venue in a timely manner. Ms. Hebb will provide further information at October meeting.

VI. Discussion regarding potential Criminal History Retreat – Participatory, Chairman Weisberg and Barbara Tombs-Souvey.

***Criminal History Retreat:*** Chairman Weisberg gave a brief overview on the purpose of the Criminal History Retreat and the background of the facilitator, Richard Frase. The Chairman strongly urged full attendance by Commission members at the Criminal History Retreat on November 14, 2017. The Chairman encouraged the Commission members to read Richard Frase's report on Criminal History prior to the retreat and prepare a list of questions or topics they would like to discuss.

Ms. Tombs-Souvey asked Commission members to participate in a brief survey answering criminal history questions using the electronic keypad device to test the devices effectiveness. Ms. Tombs-Souvey then turned over the demonstration to Mehmet Ergun, Statistician, to instruct members on how to use the electronic keypad device when answering the questions. The Commission members stated that the electronic keypad device was easy to use and allowed for anonymous responses to the questions posed.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

October 17, 2017  
One Judiciary Square (441 4<sup>th</sup> St., NW), Room 430S.