

Spring/Summer 2023, Issue 7

THE COMMISSION CHRONICLE

D.C. Sentencing Commission Biannual Newsletter



Learn more about the Commission's recent updates: New tools to help you engage with the Commission; New Videos focused on how to utilize the Commission's services; New Staff Members to assist with concerns; New Publications to help you better understand the landscape of adult felony sentencing in the District.

COMMISSION UPDATES

This biannual newsletter includes a section highlighting one of our Commission members and provides a synopsis of topics discussed during recent Commission meetings.

LEARN MORE



New Website Features

D.C. Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines Feedback Form

The Commission has created a feedback form on its website to simplify the process of providing feedback to the Commission. The public is encouraged to submit feedback on the D.C. Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines. Visit our website to fill out the form.

Guidelines Resource Page Coming Soon!

The agency will be debuting a new Guidelines Resource webpage on its website soon. This page will provide tools for practitioners and the public to better understand the Guidelines. It will also feature Guidelines updates and alerts.



New Publications, Social Media & Videos

Past Data Responses

Select Past Data Request Responses are now available for public viewing. The information provided in these data responses provides readers with information on adult felony arrest data and sentencing trends in the District. The Past Data Request Responses also demonstrate the Commission's data analysis capabilities.

Follow us on Instagram

New Instagram account alert!

Follow @dcsentencingcommission to stay updated. The account will feature a wide array of content including videos, publication overviews and the Commission out in the community.

New YouTube Video Series

The Commission has a new YouTube video series on its channel focused on discussing available services.

The most recent video focuses on how to book a presentation or training.



New Members & Staff

The Commission has **17** Commission members (**12** voting members and **5** non-voting members) that represent an array of federal and District-based agencies and organizations. Members represent agencies such as the D.C. Superior Court, Metropolitan Police Department, & the United States Attorney's Office of the District of Columbia to name a few.

The Commission also has **9** staff members that support the daily operations of the Commission.

To view the full Commission membership and staff list, visit <https://scdc.dc.gov/page/commission-members-and-staff>

New Staff

The agency has welcomed two new staff members!

The Commission is excited to welcome Nicholas McGuire, Attorney Advisor, and Keelin Herbst, Policy Advisor, to the team.

The agency is currently fully staffed.

New Members

The Commission welcomes two new voting members: Nazgol Ghandnoosh from the Sentencing Project, and the Honorable Judge Rainey Brandt of the D.C. Superior Court.

Commission Member Farewell

The Commission sends a farewell to two of its long-time members. Molly Gill, Vice President of Policy at Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), was appointed as a citizen member by the D.C. Council in 2012. Eric Glover, General Counsel at the D.C. Department of Corrections, has been with the Commission since 2020. The Commission wishes them well on the next steps of their journey.

Commission Member Highlight

Dr. Nazgol Ghandnoosh

HOW LONG HAVE YOU SERVED ON THE COMMISSION?

I was appointed in February 2023.

What is your favorite part about being on the Commission?

As a researcher who has been grateful for data compiled by Commission staff, it's a treat to have more opportunities to work with them and to learn from other Commission members. I'm especially interested in diving into the details of the impact of criminal histories on sentencing. There's a growing movement nationwide, including among sentencing commissions and prosecutors, to think more critically about how criminal histories prolong prison terms and contribute to racial disparities. I hope that DC can become a leader on this issue.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I'm a novice soccer player, 1st grade soccer coach, and 5th grade soccer carpool driver.

What led to your decision to work with the Sentencing Project?

Prior to joining The Sentencing Project (TSP), I was completing my Ph.D. research on extreme sentences in California. For this project, I focused on people serving parole-eligible life sentences and a community that was advocating for their release. Joining TSP allowed me to continue researching these issues, to situate them within a national context and identify state-level variation, and to better connect my work with policy debates. I have especially appreciated TSP's commitment to meaningfully take on mass incarceration, such as through our campaign to end life imprisonment, while also recognizing that we need more effective policies to promote public safety, especially in communities of color.

If you could wave a magic wand, what change (if any) would you like to see in the criminal justice community?

I would have the United States join most of our industrialized peer countries in ending life imprisonment and impose a sentencing cap of 20 years in most cases. Sentences beyond this duration do not promote community safety because sentencing severity has a limited deterrent effect, people age out of criminal activity, and extreme sentences put upward pressure on the entire sentencing structure while diverting resources from more effective investments in community safety.

Commission Meeting Recap

During the initial part of 2023, members focused on planning for the potential passage of the Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022 and the impact it would have on the Guidelines and the District's criminal justice environment. This legislation was blocked by Congress and will not be immediately enacted into law. The Commission has shifted its focus to potential substantive changes to the Guidelines.

Monthly Meeting are held

EVERY THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH VIA WEBEX

Visit www.scdc.dc.gov/page/commission-meetings to attend future meetings or see recordings of past meetings.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Commission is focused on educating the community regarding the D.C. Voluntary Sentencing Guidelines and the function of the Sentencing Commission. Join us at event near you. Stay updated by click the Events tab on the agencies website. Also, if you would like the Commission to participate in your community event, email scdc@dc.gov

ANC 2F COMMUNITY MEETING (JULY 5, 2023 AT 6 PM)

BEAT THE STREETS EVENT (KENNEDY REC 600 BLOCK OF O STREET NW) (JULY 20, 2023 FROM 12PM - 6PM)

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (WARD 5) (AUGUST 1, 2023)

1D CAC COMMUNITY MEETING (SEPTEMBER 5, 2023 AT 6:30PM)

ANC SMD 6D07 COMMUNITY MEETING (SEPTEMBER 11, 2023, AT 7PM)

ANC 1D COMMUNITY MEETING (SEPTEMBER 19, 2023, AT 7PM)

CJAN "THE MORE YOU KNOW" (SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 AT 6:30PM)

CAC 5D COMMUNITY MEETING (SEPTEMBER 28, 2023, AT 7PM)

1ST FRIDAY COMMUNITY MEETING (AUGUST 4TH, 2023 AT 10 AM)

ANACOSTIA PAVILION SKATE NIGHT EVENT (OCTOBER 28, 2023, FROM 12 PM - 4 PM)