

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force  
Legal Process Subcommittee

Minutes of October 21, 2016 Meeting

Present: Kevin Schneider, Susan Silver, Lynn Branham and Esther Patt

The Subcommittee discussed narrowing down priorities for its work and assigned to members further pursuit of information pertaining to these areas of concern:

Lynn Branham: Cash bail and pre-trial services.

- Administration of financial release conditions – cash bail set by judges in court
- Bail set by jail officials (avoiding pretrial detention)
- Risk assessment tools that are free from racial bias

Kevin Schneider: Prosecutorial practices and discretion.

- Charging: shoplifting as burglary, obstruction of justice, driving on suspended/revoked license, crimes with mandatory minimums
- Plea bargaining
- Prosecutorial guidelines
- “Time served” sentences and inducements to plead guilty
- Revocation of probation and supervised release

Esther Patt: Public defender.

- Caseloads
- Percent of trials vs. plea bargains
- Resources for investigators, expert witnesses, etc.

Susan Silver: Diversion that avoids criminal convictions

- Instituted by police
- Institution by prosecutor
- Instituted by judges
- Expanded community-based sentencing/diversion options: restorative justice court, reparative probation, minimizing impact of sentences on jobs.

Issues not yet assigned which require attention:

- Arrests for driving on suspended or revoked license and suspension or revocation specifically for failure to pay fines or other monetary reasons (as opposed to DUI)
- Court Practices for Failure to Appear
  - Warrants
  - Reminder of court dates
  - Education and determination of special needs (pre-trial services)
- Racial composition of juries
- Structural reforms (local level)
  - Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
  - Ongoing data collection and evaluation
  - Outcome measures employed at all steps of the criminal justice process
  - Transparency
  - Public reporting/education/input
- Training of all criminal justice officials
  - Implicit bias

- Restorative justice
- Community diversion sentencing options
  
- State laws
  - Elimination of financial release conditions
  - Elimination of mandatory minimums
  - Independent public defenders

Respectfully submitted by,  
Esther Patt