

# **Alaska Criminal Justice Data Analysis Commission**

**Meeting Summary  
Thursday, August 31, 2023  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

## **Anchorage Legislative Information Office/Zoom Hybrid**

Commissioners Present: Lt. Jean Achee (Sitka Police Department) [Zoom]; Samantha Cherot (Public Defender); Matt Claman (Alaska Senate) [Zoom]; Alex Cleghorn (Alaska Native Justice Center) [Zoom]; James Cockrell (Comm. Dept. of Public Safety); David Mannheimer (Ret. Judge, COA); William Montgomery (Bethel District Court Judge) [Zoom]; Laura Russell (Department of Health); John Skidmore (Deputy Atty Gen, Criminal Div. Dept. of Law) [Zoom]; Brenda Stanfill (ANDVSA); Trevor Stephens (Ret. Judge, Ketchikan Superior Court); Sarah Vance (Alaska House of Representatives) [Zoom]; April Wilkerson (Deputy Commissioner, Department of Corrections) [Zoom]; Steve Williams (CEO, Alaska Mental Health Trust) [Zoom]; Brian Wilson (Capt. Anchorage Police Department); John Yoakum (PDA/DOL designee).

Participants: Jessie Alloway (Department of Law); Dr. Ingrid Johnson (AJiC); Dr. Brad Myrstol (AJiC); Tony Piper (DBH); Lisa Purinton (DPS); Doreen Schenkenberger (Partners for Progress) [Zoom]; Travis Welch (Mental Health Trust).

AJC Staff: Susanne DiPietro; Brian Brossmer; Teri Carns; Susie Dosik, contract attorney  
Barbara Dunham.

### **Welcome, Approve Agenda and Prior Meeting Summary**

Chair Claman called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. He called roll for the commissioners, and asked that people present in the Anchorage LIO office introduce themselves.

He asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Cherot moved to approve, and Mr. Stephens seconded. Mr. Skidmore asked to amend the agenda to include the topic of future meetings. There was no objection. There were no objections to adopting the agenda as amended.

Chair Claman asked for a motion to approve the summary of the May meeting. He noted that his position was now as a Senator in the Alaska legislature. Mr. Williams noted that Mr. Skidmore's appellation should be "Mr." Mr. Williams moved, and Ms. Cherot seconded a motion that the meeting summary be adopted with these changes. There were no objections, and the meeting summary was adopted.

### **Report on Commissioner travel to National Association of Sentencing Commissions**

Mr. Skidmore said that he and Commissioners Brenda Stanfill and Trevor Stephens presented a history of Alaska's bans on plea bargains at the annual meeting the National Association of Sentencing Commission, a group involved with sentencing commissions or

sentencing research and policy. One benefit in the mid-1970s was that cases resolved more quickly with less plea bargaining.

Ms. Stanfill said that she had learned that Alaska prosecutors have a higher standard for acceptance of cases for prosecution than other states. Ms. Skidmore said that one important result of the first ban was adoption of a “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard to accept cases for prosecution rather than the “probable cause” standard used by most other jurisdictions. As a result, it might appear that Alaska dismissed or screened out more cases, because law enforcement typically uses a “probable cause” standard for arrest and filing initial charges. Mr. Cleghorn asked what standard other states used. Mr. Skidmore said that he had not had a chance to research that topic. He noted that Alaska is one of the few states with a unified system for handling felony cases, and that the structure of prosecutors’ offices affects all aspects of managing criminal cases.

### **Public Comment**

Chair Claman opened the floor to public comment at 10:30 a.m., and closed it at 11:00 a.m. No members of the public appeared for the purpose of making comments. Chair Claman noted that the Commission will receive written public comments at any time, by mail or through the Commission’s website.

### **Review of draft 2023 Annual Report**

Chair Claman ask members to review the draft annual report. Ms. DiPietro said that much of the report uses the format of reports from the DAC’s predecessor, the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission. This provides the legislature and public a familiar format, while also permitting a view of trends in data and policies over time. She noted that the Recidivism section has changed somewhat to accommodate the new statutory definition; the section on time to disposition covered material that the DAC members have already seen; the sections on victims and diversion programs are included because they were on the commission’s list of research projects for the year, but are new to members; and that other sections that are required by statute need to be updated or were incomplete at the time that the draft report was prepared.

Members reviewed and commented on Parts I and II of the report. At 11:45 a.m., Chair Claman asked members to consider the options for completing the review of the report. He recommended another meeting to be held after members have had two weeks to review and comment to staff, which would be between mid-September and early October. Members agreed that they would respond to a meeting organizer sent out by Ms. DiPietro to set a date for another review meeting. He also asked staff to invite members to give possible dates for a late October meeting for any further review needed.

Mr. Cleghorn moved that the meeting adjourn at 11:57 a.m. There were no objections, and the meeting adjourned.