



GOVERNOR'S COORDINATING OFFICES

Community Initiatives · Service & Volunteerism · Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Crime Prevention, Youth, & Victim Services · Small, Minority, & Women Business Affairs
Banneker-Douglass Museum · Volunteer Maryland

March 22, 2022

Chair Luke Clippinger
Judiciary Committee
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 392 - State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy - Annual Report and Data Dashboard (The Judicial Transparency Act of 2022)

POSITION: Support

Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services is providing this letter of support for Senate Bill 392: State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy - Annual Report and Data Dashboard (The Judicial Transparency Act of 2022).

This piece of legislation requires the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) to include in its annual report specified information for sentences involving a "crime of violence" under § 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article. MSCCSP would have to include in its annual report for each crime of violence as defined by Criminal Law Article § 14-101(a), disaggregated by county:

- the number and percentage of sentencing events in each disposition category, as indicated on the sentencing guidelines worksheet;
- the number and percentage of sentencing events that resulted in a departure from the sentencing guidelines; and
- for sentencing events that resulted in a departure from the sentencing guidelines, the departure reasons cited and the number and percentage of events in which each reason was cited.

The State Commission must also include in its annual report the following information for sentencing events involving a crime of violence, disaggregated by county and crime:

- the average total sentence;

- the average non suspended sentence; and
- for sentences in which a portion of the sentence was suspended, the average percentage of the total sentence suspended.

The bill would additionally require MSCCSP to report the information listed above by circuit for the first, second, and fourth judicial circuits and post the information required in a data dashboard on its public website.

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services emphasizes the importance of data in criminal justice policy and following evidence-based practices to ensure a safer Maryland. This legislation is an example of useful data to criminal justice stakeholders in law enforcement and the judicial system to determine and evaluate if sentences are guidelines compliant according to the Maryland State Commission on Sentencing Policy. Additionally, tracking this information will bolster public confidence that members of the judiciary are holding violent criminals accountable for their actions. With the spike in violent crime throughout the state, the need for accountability in all levels of the justice system cannot be understated.

For these reasons, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services supports Senate Bill 392 and urges a favorable report.

Sincerely,



Yesim K. Karaman

Chief of Staff

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services