



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Recommends Legislation on Prosecutorial Practices**

The Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released an [Advisory Memorandum](#) following its April 2019 [briefing](#) about Connecticut prosecutorial practices. In this briefing, the Committee learned that there is a need for more information about the exercise of prosecutorial discretion to assess the effect it could have on racial disparities in Connecticut's prison population.

The Committee is encouraged that there is pending legislation in the Connecticut General Assembly designed to address this important topic; it recommends that any law should include the following components:

1. **Mandatory Data Collection:** Prosecutors in Connecticut have tremendous discretion but there is little data available about their work. Instituting broad data collection would create much-needed transparency. The Legislature should pass legislation that would mandate the Division of Criminal Justice to collect and compile specific data about its work and submit an annual report with the data to the Criminal Justice Commission.
2. **Adequate funding to provide more substantial training for prosecutors:** The legislature should appropriate adequate funding to the Division of Criminal Justice for bringing trainers into the division, sending prosecutors to trainings, or both. Prosecutors should engage in training including, but not limited to, anti-bias training, cultural competency training, and training on the impact of their decisions.
3. **Opportunities for the Community to Engage in the Appointment of Prosecutors:** The Legislature should consider ways to broaden the mandate of the Criminal Justice Commission and to allow the public meaningful access to the appointment and reappointment of prosecutors, including public meetings for legislators and members of the public.
4. **Expansion of the Early Screening and Intervention program:** The Committee applauds the Chief State's Attorney's Office for the success of its pilot Early Screening Intervention Program, which is designed to identify defendants whose interactions with law enforcement reflect a lack of access to social services and support and for whom increased access to appropriate services and support would reduce the likelihood of future offenses. This program should be funded and expanded to all State's Attorney's Offices across the state.

These reforms are necessary to increase transparency and create oversight and accountability in Connecticut's criminal justice system. Moreover, the proposed legislation mentioned above may help to diagnose and address the causes of the overrepresentation of communities of color in Connecticut's criminal defendant and prison populations.

The Committee is reviewing the testimony and materials submitted for the record and intends to release a report to the Commission, including formal findings and recommendations, at the conclusion of this project.

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*The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. For information about the Commission, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*