



VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION

2018 INTERIM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Established in 1966, the Virginia State Crime Commission is a legislative agency authorized by Virginia Code § 30-156 et seq. to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection. The Crime Commission is a criminal justice agency as defined in Virginia Code § 9.1-101.

The Crime Commission consists of thirteen members - nine legislative members, three non-legislative citizen members, and one state official, as follows: six members of the House of Delegates appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; three members of the Senate appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; three non-legislative citizen members appointed by the Governor; and the Attorney General or his designee.

In addition to a number of ongoing studies, the Crime Commission received numerous bill referrals and letter requests in 2018. Staff studied three new topics over the past year, including sex trafficking, fingerprinting of defendants, and the overall pre-trial process. Additionally, staff continued work on two previously authorized studies: pretrial services agencies and the DNA Notification Project. Finally, as part of the pretrial services agencies study, staff and numerous other stakeholders began work on the Virginia Pre-Trial Data Project. This project is an unprecedented, collaborative effort between all three branches of government and numerous state and local agencies. The Project consists of gathering and analyzing data to develop a cohort of defendants charged across all court systems throughout the entire Commonwealth. The goal of the project is to determine the effectiveness of various pre-trial release mechanisms at ensuring public safety and appearance rates at court proceedings. Findings from both the DNA Notification Project and the Pre-Trial Data Project are planned for presentation in 2019.

The Crime Commission held three meetings to review and discuss study findings: October 11, November 8, and December 3. At its December meeting, the Crime Commission endorsed numerous legislative and administrative recommendations from staff on the topics of sex trafficking, fingerprinting of defendants, and the overall pre-trial process. A significant number of those recommendations were introduced during the 2019 Session as a result of the fingerprinting study to ensure that criminal offenses are applied both retrospectively and prospectively to defendants' criminal history records. Several other recommendations were introduced to combat sex trafficking by increasing penalties, creating a statewide coordinator, and establishing a prevention fund. Members also endorsed legislation stemming from the Pre-Trial Data Project which would amend the contempt statute to allow for more accurate tracking of failure to appear charges and convictions across the Commonwealth. Additionally, as a result of last year's study, staff identified a technical amendment to the collection of DNA following certain misdemeanor convictions.

The Crime Commission's Executive Director serves as a member of the Forensic Science Board pursuant to Virginia Code § 9.1-1109(A)(7) and acts as the Chair of the DNA Notification Subcommittee. The Executive Director also serves on the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission in accordance with Virginia Code § 19.2-163.02, as well as their Budget Committee. Additionally, the Executive Director serves on the Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence pursuant to Virginia Code § 9.1-116.2.

Detailed study presentations can be found on the Crime Commission's website at: <http://vscc.virginia.gov>. The final 2018 Annual Report will be published in June 2019.