

Sec. 37. SENTENCING RECONSIDERATION; WORKING GROUP; REPORT

(a) Creation. There is created the Sentencing Reconsideration Working Group to review Vermont's laws concerning the criminal sentencing review process and to propose any changes to current law or practices.

(b) Membership. The Working Group shall be composed of the following members:

(1) the Chief Superior Judge or designee;

(2) the Defender General or designee;

(3) the Commissioner of Corrections or designee;

(4) the Executive Director of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs or designee;

(5) the Executive Director of the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence or designee;

(6) the Executive Director of Racial Equity or designee; and

(7) the Executive Director of the Center for Crime Victim Services or designee.

(c) Consultation. The Working group shall consult with stakeholders including:

(1) Drop LWOP Law New England;

(2) the Racial Disparities in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System Advisory Panel; and

(3) the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont.

(d) Powers and duties. The Working Group shall study Vermont's criminal sentencing review laws and practices, including the following topics:

(1) current sentencing ~~guidelines~~ practices;

(2) relevant statutory and case law, including a review of 13 V.S.A. § 7042;

(3) the resources and procedures of the Vermont Judiciary, the Department of Corrections, the Office of the Defender General, and the Department of Sheriffs and States Attorneys;

~~(4) the resources and procedures of the Department of Corrections;~~

(4) victim impact and any role the victim or victim's family should play in the sentencing review process; and

(5) the viability of a "second look" review process the manner in which a Vermont sentence reconsideration process could operate and how that process could relate with other post-conviction remedies currently available.

~~(d) Assistance. The Working Group shall have the administrative, technical, and legal assistance of the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs.~~

(d) Report. On or before November 15, 2025, the Working group shall submit a written report in the form of proposed legislation to House Committees on Judiciary and on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committees on Judiciary and on Institutions.

(e) Meetings.

(1) The Chief Superior Judge or designee shall call the first meeting of the Working Group to occur on or before August 1, 2025.

(2) The Chief Superior Judge or designee shall be the chair.

(3) The Working Group shall meet not more than six times.

(4) The Working Group shall cease to exist on February 15, 2026.