



RocACTS Justice System Taskforce

July 12, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Present: Bruce Carswell, Deacon Ralph Carter, Kanza Chatman, Roberta Davis, Dr. Gayle Harrison, Laurie Mahoney, Jonathon Nwagharaocha, Eleanor Stauffer, Amy Stockwell

The meeting came to order at 6:04.

1. Court Date for Keyvin Chatman- Mr. Chatman's wife, Kanza Chatman, informed us that there has been a postponement of his sentencing. The new court date is 10/14/21 at 3:00. The hope is that due to the psychosocial details of his upbringing and early life (written by members of the Taskforce to the court) and the current turnabout of his life (he has completed a rehabilitation program through the Salvation Army, a degree in Addictions from MCC, is employed by Catholic Family Service, is married and expecting a child), his plea agreement will be reconsidered and rescinded.

Currently Mr. Chatman is labeled "a career offender". According to the United States Sentencing Commission (May 2021) "a career offender is someone who commits a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense after two prior felony convictions for those crimes. The sentencing guidelines assign all career offenders to Criminal History Category (CHC) VI and to offense levels at or near the statutory maximum penalty of the offense of conviction. "

There was much discussion and questions about this label, its true meaning, the history of disparate labeling of crimes, sentencing lengths and consequences due to racism and classism, and the lack of restorative practices in the justice system. If this label can be removed from Mr. Chatman, it will be easier to secure a new plea agreement.

All letters of support and inquiries should be addressed to his lawyer:

Anne Burger, Esq.

Anne_burger@fd.org

585-263-6201

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- A.** Ellie Stauffer- Fairport, NY Police and Roberts Wesleyan College have embarked on a joint effort to focus on reconciliation instead of punishment. Ms. Stauffer will contact professors at Roberts Wesleyan College, Restorative Justice Program, and invite them to present at a Taskforce meeting. Subjects of interest include use of force issues, career offender designation, available restorative programs in the criminal justice system.
- B.** Ralph Carter will contact Sue Porter, Ex. Director of the Judicial Process Commission (JPC) as a consultant. We need the names of federal level organizations that do the work of the JPC, namely advocacy, education, public awareness, and support services such as rap sheet review and applications for certificates of rehabilitation for ex-offenders.
- C.** Pres. Harrison- will contact Rep. Charles Schumer, Rep. Joe Morelle, and Rep. Gillibrand about the process for obtaining a federal pardon on Mr. Chatman's behalf.
- D.** Ralph Carter- will set up a Google Drive so that Taskforce members can communicate and work on tasks more efficiently.
- E.** Kanza Chatman will send the psychosocial letter to Ralph Carter who will distribute it to Taskforce members.

2. Plush Dozier – Roberta Buckle was not present to update us on this case.

3. Legislation

- A.** Daniel's Law- this is a bill that would create mental health response units trained in de-escalation techniques and substance abuse emergencies across the state of NY. These units would replace armed police. It is named after Daniel Prude, It did not pass the State legislature this year.
- B.** Qualified Immunity- is a Supreme Court doctrine that shields employees of state and federal governments from being held civilly liable for constitutional violations. This includes policing. Police who use excessive force are prevented from being held accountable for their conduct.

Democrats in the state of NY legislature are proposing a bill that would end qualified immunity for police officers as they change NY's criminal justice system.
- C.** For the People Act- this bill would voter registration, restore voting rights, protect the ballot, end gerrymandering, provide election security, ensure campaign transparency, counter foreign interference, enforce campaign finance laws and strengthen contribution limits, expand lobbyist disclosure, and engage in ethics reforms

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Invite Ted Forsyth PABA, to a Taskforce meeting to discuss policing issues.

4. Leadership Assembly- RocACTS is reminding its Taskforce members that it is changing its structure. The Board will be elected and will ONLY handle process, procedure, and fiduciary responsibilities. To determine the issues and priorities that will focus RocACTS, we will hold a Leadership Assembly, a gathering of all of our members and those interested in RocACTS. A Leadership Assembly Steering Committee will plan and lead the Leadership Assembly. The Steering Committee will be comprised of members from our organizations, Taskforce Chairs, three members of the Religious Leaders Caucus, and individuals.

5. Announcements

A. Taskforces are looking for Co-Chairs

B. Meetings for JSTF are on the 2nd Mon. at 6:00

C. Next mtg. – Time Keeper- Ellie Stauffer, Facilitator- Gayle Harrison, Notes- Laurie Mahoney