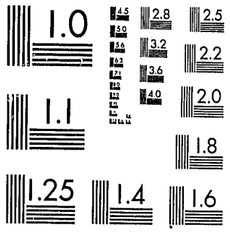

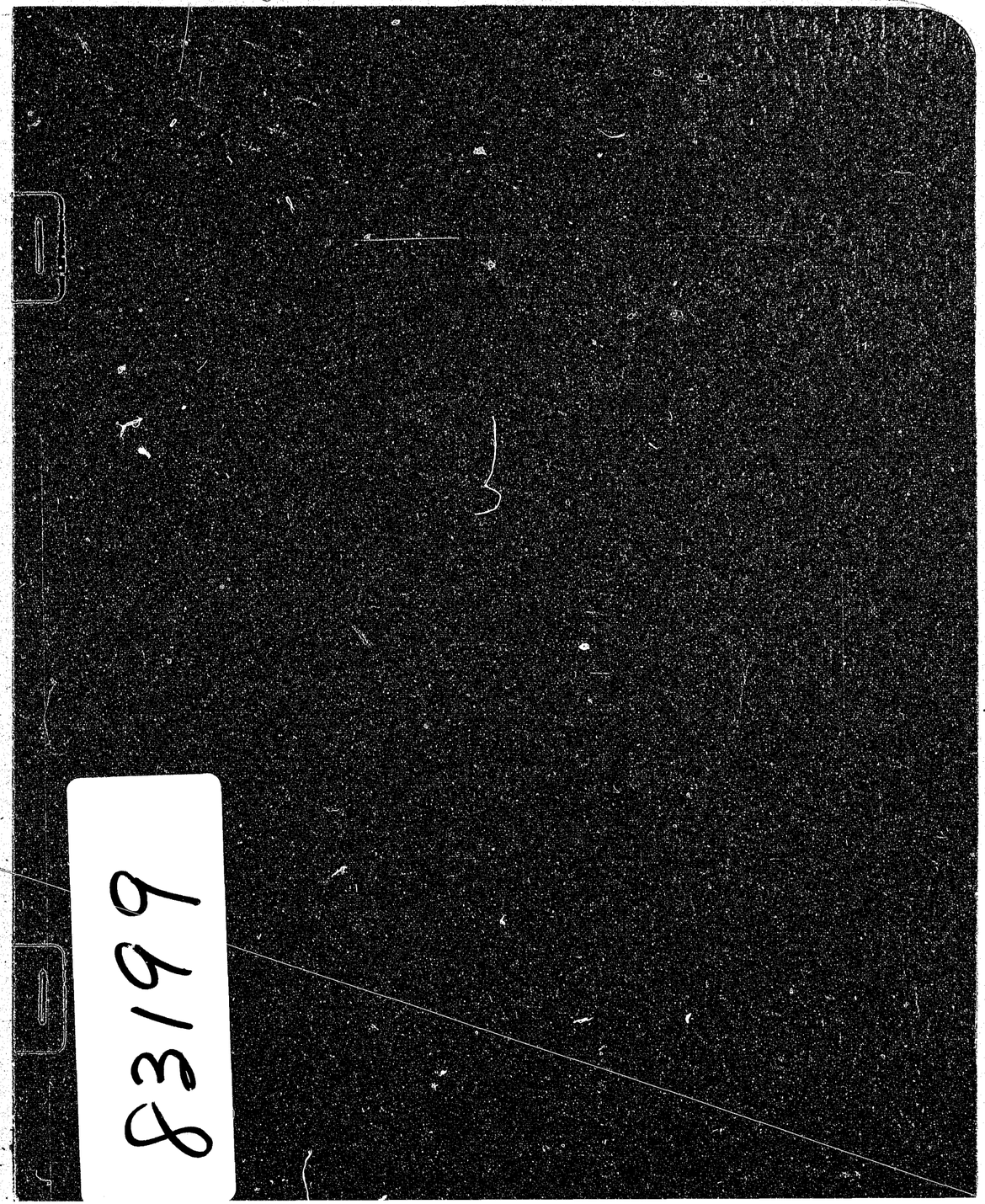

National Criminal Justice Association

SUITE 305 • 444 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20001

(202) 347-4900

Bulletin

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Risk Assessment: An Innovation Whose Time May Have Come

By
Paul Stageberg

Prediction, it seems, has always been regarded as more of an art than a science, whether it be prediction of the weather, cataclysmic events, or human behavior. Those of us who aren't meteorologists probably take weather forecasts with a grain of salt, an attitude induced by many picnics interrupted by thunderstorms. Prediction of cataclysms is regarded even more suspiciously, as shown recently by attitudes toward those predicting the earth's demise when the planets aligned on one side of the sun.

Predicting human behavior can be just as risky — in terms of reactions toward those making the predictions — as predicting natural disasters. Images of Biblical prophets, crystal balls and tea leaves come to mind when we think of human behavior predictions. Thus, those who risk predicting the future have been regarded by humankind as everything from psychics to psychopaths, depending on the accuracy of their predictions.

Accuracy obviously determines the usefulness and value of a prediction system. If I could tell with 70% accuracy the winner of the fifth race at Pimlico, I would certainly generate some interest. In criminal justice, if I could predict with the same certainty that probationer John Doe is likely to be arrested for a new violent crime while on probation, I would hope to be able to generate similar interest from authorities governing Mr. Doe's probation.

In fact, predicting future criminal behavior is receiving interest because of developments in the area of risk assessment. The work of Burgess and the Gluecks in the late 20's and early 30's first drew attention to prediction of future criminal behavior, and a major impetus for more recent work came with the work done for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency by Don Gottfredson, Leslie Wilkins, and Peter Hoffman in the early 1970's.

Prior to this work, there was little or no systematic use of "base expectancy" tables or other prediction devices in criminal justice. Today a number of systems are used, and those not using systems are expressing intense interest. About 25 states and the federal government sent representatives to risk assessment workshops sponsored by the Criminal Justice Statistics Association (CJSA) in 1981, and additional inquiries have been received from states that did not participate.

While the term "risk assessment" may sound ominous to some, implying either a multitude of complicated statistical computations or a clinician delving into the psycho-social aspects of human behavior to predict future behavior, apprehension isn't warranted. Risk assessment systems may, in fact, be very simple and straight-forward.

There are several fundamental variables to consider in examining risk assessment systems today, in part because systems which have shown acceptable degrees of accuracy vary considerably in their complexity, accuracy, and use potential. Given the variety of systems now available, anyone examining risk assessment systems should be asking the following question:

1) What resources exist to develop, implement, and maintain a risk assessment system?

2) How much information is available for use in the system?

3) At what stage of the criminal justice process is use of the system anticipated?

4) Can violent recidivism be predicted, and is it important to do so?

These questions are addressed in some detail below.

Conventional wisdom says complex risk assessment systems — those which use either many different data elements or fewer elements in a complex manner — aren't necessarily more accurate than simple systems. Only with difficulty, the argument goes, can one or two additional variables add predictive power to a system that already includes the five or six best predictors. This is true because variables inevitably overlap in their predictive power: one variable may account for 25% of the variation in a certain phenomenon, and the next best variable account for 20%, but the two combined don't necessarily account for 45%.

A related problem is that criminal justice agencies do not possess unlimited resources, particularly when government is seeking every possible means to reduce expenditures. A practitioner can much more easily operate a risk assessment which requires only eight pieces of information than one with 20 pieces, particularly when the eight may be readily available and some of the twenty may not.

For a long time, this conventional wisdom went virtually unchallenged. Researchers developing more complex systems, or using more variables, were able to show little more predictive power than simple systems. At best, both types of systems showed only about 40% accuracy in identifying those who were likely to recidivate or otherwise "fail."

During the past four years, however, the conventional wisdom has been challenged by Daryl R. Fischer, a Ph.D mathematician who has studied criminal justice data in Iowa since 1975. Fischer's work — first with the Bureau of Correctional Evaluation and now with the Statistical Analysis Center — is unusual in several respects:

1) It has moved away from regression and "unit weighting" — the basic tools of previous risk assessment systems — toward "configural analysis," which examines configurations of variables and their relationships to future behavior. Among other advantages, this method reduces the problem of variable overlap experienced with previous systems.

2) Fischer combines 20 variables — more than any other system — in a more complex manner. While most other systems use variables in an additive scheme — say, add ten points if an offender has a drug problem, or fifteen if the crime were against persons — Fischer uses such a scheme only after most of the assessment process is completed.

3) Most other risk assessment systems have had problems with "shrinkage," as they may be able to "predict" recidivism with significantly more accuracy on the sample from which the system was developed than on a new sample. Fischer's system, however, showed about 70% accuracy when applied to his original sample, and only slightly less than that on the validation sample.

4) With the exception of a system developed in Michigan, risk assessment systems have typically failed to address the topic of new violent recidivism, perhaps due to an assumption that violent crime cannot be predicted because it is infrequent compared to the volume of total crime. Fischer's work shows that new violent crime by probationers and parolees can, indeed, be predicted, and with as much accuracy as recidivism in general. In fact, Fischer's system requires fewer variables to predict new violence — only eight — than for general recidivism, and the testing of the violence risk assessment systems on a validation sample showed greater accuracy than for the original construction sample.

A final assessment of Fischer's system should be complete by the end of 1982. Because of suggestions by Peter Hoffman, Director of Research for the U.S. Parole Commission and developer of the "salient factor score" used by the Commission, Fischer is undertaking a new validation of his system to answer the skeptics' concerns. It is his hope that this new effort will result in predictive power as strong as found in his earlier work, perhaps with some simplification of the system.

Simplifying the Iowa system could be one of the keys to its eventual use, as some of its "key" variables are either unavailable in some jurisdictions, (e.g., number of juvenile arrests, age at first arrest) or vulnerable to criticism because of their lack of "intuitive" relationship to criminal justice (e.g., marital status, skill level). Fischer intends to carefully examine those variables in the new validation to determine whether they are indispensible or may be replaced by variables which are either more easily obtained or which do not raise "due process" concerns.

Wide Application

One of the attractions of risk assessment systems is their wide applicability within the justice system. Because the same variables tend to predict success and failure at diverse stages of the criminal justice process, practitioners throughout the system possess the potential to benefit from use of risk assessment. The same variables that correlate with rearrest on probation, for example, have been shown to correlate with arrests during the pre-trial period. To some extent they also correlate with the incidence of misconduct in prison, or absconding at any stage of the process.

This diversity of uses makes risk assessment a particularly valuable tool to help make the justice system more efficient, especially in light of the current state of most governmental budgets and rising prison and probation populations. Consider, for example, a state which has exhausted all its maximum security prison space, but has vacancies in minimum security or work release. Which inmates can safely be placed in these less-secure environments?

Historically, inmates convicted of the least-serious crimes would be considered the best risks, for dangerousness is assumed to correlate with the severity of the crime of conviction. Risk assessment can be used to identify low-risk prison inmates in these situations, and may very well not confirm this assumption.

Consider, too, the probation administrator whose caseloads are already high but who faces a staff reduction due to budget constraints. What probationers can he safely put on minimum supervision or on "paper" caseloads? Risk assessment can tell him.

Risk assessment can also be used for general study of the criminal justice process and its effectiveness, or to examine the veracity of some of the assumptions under which the system has long been operating. Most people take as a given, for example, that judges send the "worst" risks to prison, and keep the "best" in the community. Everybody — with the possible exception of some irate prosecutors and police — assumes that parole boards release the "best" prison inmates and reject the "worst."

Fischer's work in Iowa has served to examine these assumptions, and has cast some real doubt on their accuracy. His studies have shown that the use of risk assessment at the sentencing and paroling stages could result in reduced prison populations accompanied by increased public protection. It sounds like heresy, but most definitely is not.

Another potential application for risk assessment devices is in program evaluation. Traditionally, one of the thorniest problems faced by those evaluating programs has been controlling for pre-program screening. Because of differences in screening criteria, a program showing a recidivism rate — however defined — of, say, 25% is not necessarily more "effective" than one showing a 40% rate. The screening process resulting in placement in the first program, in this case, could have resulted in assignment of much lower-risk individuals then was true for the second.

Given two programs with 25% and 40% recidivism rates, risk assessment can be used to determine which program actually proved the more effective. In the former program, say I assessed the participants and found an average risk of recidivism of 30% during the period in question. The program, in this case, successfully reduced recidivism by 5%. In the second program, say risk assessment showed an expected recidivism rate of 60%. Thus the second program reduced recidivism by 20%, and is really the more effective of the two in reducing recidivism.

This process can also assist in initial implementation of programs, as, when a program is just getting started, it might be advisable to start with lower-risk clients than those for whom a program was designed. As a program matures, screening criteria can be modified so as to gradually admit higher-risk clients. In this manner, program administrators can reduce the likelihood

of major errors during the period in which they might prove fatal to a program's continuation.

Risk Assessment Problems

We've encountered one "problem" in Iowa during the past year as risk assessment has been more frequently used by our Board of Parole, one we had anticipated but which we've been unable to overcome. While we have shown that risk assessment can be used to lower the prison population during the past year, in fact, its use may have had an inflationary impact. The Board has gradually begun to accept the risk assessment as providing another reason to reject parole for high-risk cases, but hasn't yet begun to consistently follow our release recommendations for lower-risk inmates.

We anticipated this problem because of the nature of some of those the risk assessment system shows to be low-risk. Many of these offenders are older — age 30 and above — and they may have extensive arrest records because of their age. Some have been convicted of "sensitive" crimes such as lascivious acts with children or rape, and are in prison not because of lengthy prior records but due to the seriousness of the convicting offense.

The parole board members, understandably, view many of these people suspiciously, in the back of their minds contemplating the egg on their faces if even one of these "low-risk" inmates were rearrested for a similar crime. A burglar rearrested on parole for burglary is one thing, but a child molester rearrested for lascivious acts is another.

Another problem associated with the use of risk assessment is the resistance of many practitioners and administrators to change. In urging implementation of risk assessment as an aid in decision-making, one is not only requiring a change in behavior, but is also suggesting that a statistical device, using a select group of variables, can better predict a client's future criminal activity than the practitioner's "professional judgment." As much as one might be able to document it statistically, this isn't something any practitioner wants to hear. It rings of being replaced by a computer.

Another point this raises is that it is easy for some individuals to latch onto risk assessment or any similar innovation as a panacea, which it clearly is not. Risk assessment should be used to augment the judgment of criminal justice professionals, not replace it. Those of us who support such systems are not suggesting that computers replace parole boards, for example, although some would maintain that we are. Similarly, risk shouldn't be used as the sole criterion in an institutional classification system or in sentencing.

The development of a predictive device for violent recidivism, I believe, is a significant step forward. While society may tolerate a certain amount of recidivism from those on pre-trial release, or probationers, or parolees, acceptance of new violent recidivism is slight. What single crime received the most publicity in Iowa in 1981? The murder of two police officers by a parolee. While Iowa may be unusual in having a relatively low rate of violent crime, the publicity attached to events of this type is probably not unusual.

Any board of parole would express interest if told that they could significantly reduce the incidence of violent crime by parolees without an increase in the prison population. This can be accomplished — right now — through the use of statistical risk assessment methods such as those developed in Iowa.

At this point, then, it would appear that the future for risk assessment in criminal justice is bright. While there are questions yet to be answered, and skeptics to convince, risk assessment advocates appear to have momentum. As existing systems continue to be tested and refined, and the accuracy of the best systems is validated, I am convinced that risk assessment will gain widespread use in the criminal justice system. The public is currently telling government to do more with less. Risk assessment holds the promise to help do just that.

Paul Stageberg is Director of the Statistical Analysis Center of the Iowa Office for Planning and Programming in Des Moines. He is a recognized expert in innovative criminal justice applications of risk assessment.

In addition to his duties as Director of the state SAC, Mr. Stageberg serves as Executive Committee Chairperson of the Criminal Justice Statistics Association, a national association of state criminal justice statistics professionals.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE APPROVES McCLURE-VOLKMER GUN BILL

By a vote of 13-3, the Senate Judiciary Committee April 21 approved controversial gun control legislation that would make it easier for law-abiding citizens to obtain firearms but would also hamper law enforcement efforts to keep "Saturday Night Specials" out of the hands of criminals. The bill, known as S.1030, is one of more than 130 firearms measures introduced to the 97th Congress.

Known as the McClure-Volkmer bill because of its prime sponsors — Senator James McClure (R-ID) in the Senate and Representative Harold Volkmer (D-MO) in the House — S.1030 has 58 co-sponsors in the Senate and more than 170 in the House. Its chances for passage in the Senate are excellent; in the House, passage is uncertain.

Basically, S.1030 would loosen the definition of a gun dealer to allow individuals who make occasional gun sales to do so without having to maintain records. Only firms selling firearms as a regular course of trade for profit would be subject to recordkeeping requirements. In addition, firearms dealers would be permitted to sell guns from their "private collections" without maintaining records.

Warrantless inspections of firearms records and inventories could only be made once a year, and only after "reasonable notice," under S.1030. Current law requires those records and inventories to be available for inspection at all "reasonable" times. Once the warrantless inspection has been made, all future inspections must be accompanied by a warrant issued on the basis of "reasonable" cause. No criminal charges could be filed as a result of a warrantless inspection except for a sale of a weapon to a prohibited person. Where criminal charges are brought for firearm violations, prosecutors must prove "willfulness" to obtain a conviction.

The McClure-Volkmer bill would relax the existing prohibition on interstate sales of handguns and long guns. Dealers could sell firearms over the counter to out-of-state residents so long as the sale does not violate laws in either the seller's state or the buyer's state. Critics see this provision as a means of circumventing recordkeeping laws of some states by permitting guns bought legally in other states to be transported across state lines. Similarly, S.1030 would permit mail-order sales of guns so long as the buyer and the seller have previously met face-to-face and negotiated the sale. Private citizens would be permitted to import approved firearms of foreign manufacture without licenses or restrictions.

Gun control advocates succeeded in having two amendments added to the bill by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA). One requires a 14-day "cooling off" period between the purchase and acquisition of handguns to give local law enforcement officials the option of requiring a criminal history check on potential buyers. Such a check is not mandatory, however. The other amendment requires an additional mandatory minimum two-year imprisonment for anyone using a firearm in the commission of a federal felony. Both amendments are included in Kennedy's own gun control bill, S.974, which would add numerous other new restrictions on handgun sales. That bill is not expected to clear the Senate Judiciary Committee. The same is true for most other gun bills.

Several other strengthening amendments offered by Kennedy were rejected by the Judiciary Committee. Kennedy is expected to offer them again on the Senate floor when S.1030 comes up for final debate. Those amendments would: (1) restrict the bill's application only to rifles and shotguns, but not to concealable handguns; (2) ban importation of parts of handguns which would otherwise be banned if they were imported fully assembled; (3) prohibit pawnbrokers from dealing in handguns; and (4) ban armor-piercing and other "cop killer" type ammunition which has no reasonable use to serious hunters.

OMNIBUS VICTIMS PROTECTION BILL INTRODUCED BY 34 SENATORS

Comprehensive legislation designed to assist and protect crime victims and witnesses involved in the federal criminal justice process was introduced by a bipartisan group of 34 Senators April 22. The bill, S.2420, known as the Omnibus Victims Protection Act of 1982, would also serve as a victim/witness model for state and local law enforcement and criminal justice officials. At the same time, Senator John Heinz (R-PA), the bill's chief sponsor, also introduced an accompanying measure to establish a Victim Compensation Fund.

"Without the cooperation of victims and witnesses, the criminal justice system would cease to function; yet with few exceptions these individuals are either ignored by the criminal justice system or simply used as tools to identify and punish offenders," the bill states in its preliminary findings. "All too often the victim of a serious crime is forced to suffer physical, psychological, or financial hardship first as a result of the criminal act and then as a result of contact with a criminal justice system unresponsive to the real needs of the crime victim."

This omnibus bill would address the problem of victim/witness assistance by requiring judges to be informed of costs incurred by crime victims prior to sentencing, prohibiting intimidation of crime victims, requiring judges to order restitution where appropriate, providing for federal accountability for released and escaped prisoners, and limiting profits criminals can receive from selling their stories.

Specifically, S.2420 would call for a victim's impact statement, also known as a victim injury assessment, to be included in the sentencing report forwarded to the judge. This statement will assess financial, social, psychological and medical impacts upon, and any cost to, the victim of the crime in question. The purpose of the provision would be to insure that the judge considers the effect of the crime upon the victim before sentencing the accused.

In the area of victim/witness protection, the bill includes three provisions. The first imposes criminal penalties for intimidation or retaliation against both victims and witnesses. The second gives the Attorney General broader authority to relocate or protect any witness or potential witness. The third authorizes the Attorney General to initiate civil proceedings to restrain intimidation.

Another provision of S.2420 would require the judge, when personal injury or loss of property has occurred, to order restitution or state for the record the reasons such restitution shall not apply. Thus, criminals who can afford to pay costs such as out-of-pocket medical expenses, property losses and funeral expenses would be required to do so. The measure also requires the Attorney General to report to Congress within six months on ways to insure that all victims of crime are compensated for their losses and expenses directly related to a criminal act. Heinz's own restitution proposal, in the form of S.2433, would levy small fines on convicted federal criminals – either $10 for misdemeanors or $25 for felonies – or a 10% surcharge on fines owed to the federal government, whichever is greater. Separately, S.2420 calls on the Attorney General to recommend, within one year, ways to insure that no federal felon derives profit from the sale of his criminal story until the victim of the offense has had a chance to seek restitution.

Finally, the bill imposes a standard of federal accountability for escape or release of federal prisoners. U.S. District Courts would be given jurisdiction over civil claims against the U.S. for damages, injury to or loss of property, or personal injury or death caused directly by any dangerous offender charged with or convicted of a federal offense who is released or who escapes from federal custody as a result of gross negligence.

CONGRESS KEEPS WRESTLING WITH CONCURRENT BUDGET RESOLUTION

The Senate Budget Committee has completed markup of the First Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal year 1983, recommending a ceiling for Budget Function 750, encompassing the justice activities of the federal government; that ceiling appears to assume continued funding of the juvenile justice program, the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the fiscal '82 levels.

In the House, Budget Committee members moved toward markup of the First Concurrent Resolution as this issue of the JUSTICE BULLETIN went to press. While little information has been forthcoming concerning the committee's recommendations with respect to Budget Function 750, it is expected that the committee's recommendation for spending under that function will, like the Senate committee's, assume continuation of the juvenile justice program, NIJ and BJS at roughly their FY '82 levels.

Definitive action on FY '83 appropriations will not begin until completion of work on the First Concurrent Resolution. At this juncture, indications are that the appropriations subcommittees (State, Justice, Commerce, Judiciary in the Senate and Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies in the House) have also approved continuation of the juvenile justice program, NIJ and BJS. At what level is not known, but the Senate Judiciary Committee's Juvenile Justice Subcommittee has recommended a figure of $77.5 million; the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Human Services is asking for $100 million.

SENATE PANEL PLANS JUNE HEARINGS ON JUSTICE ASSISTANCE BILL

The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice plans to hold hearings on S.2411, the Justice Assistance Act of 1982, in early June shortly after the Senate returns from its Memorial Day recess. Reagan Administration witnesses are expected to highlight those hearings, although a formal witness list has not been compiled.

The new legislation, outlining a scaled-down four-year federal criminal justice assistance program, was introduced April 21 by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA). The bill includes a "modest" program to replace current formula grants with the following types of discretionary assistance: (1) national priority implementation and replication grants to aid communities wishing to replicate programs that have been proven successful in upgrading functions of the criminal justice system; (2) discretionary grants providing up to 100% assistance to communities in support of training programs for criminal justice personnel, technical assistance for communities receiving implementation and replication funds, and national demonstration grants for testing innovative new concepts; and (3) emergency law enforcement assistance for states or communities experiencing a criminal justice disaster.

Measure authorizes Congress to spend up to $125 million per year for four years as follows: $20 million for national priority programs; $20 million for discretionary programs; $20 million for emergency assistance; $10 million for training and manpower development; $5 million for administration; $25 million for operating the National Institute of Justice; and $25 million for operating the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Envisioning the need for only a minimal administrative structure to manage the new assistance program, the Specter bill would eliminate both the Office of Justice Assistance, Research and Statistics and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. A new Office of Justice Assistance would be created to "streamline" federal support activities. In addition, S.2411 would establish the new position of Assistant Attorney General for Justice Assistance to provide general staff and administrative support to "highlight" activities of NIJ, BJS, OJA and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

SURPLUS PROPERTY BILL CLEARS SENATE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS PANEL

Legislation authorizing the federal government specifically to denote surplus property to states and localities for the construction and modernization of criminal justice facilities passed the Senate Government Affairs Committee March 16 by a vote of 9-0. The effect of S.1422, sponsored by Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), would be to add correctional facilities to the select list of "public benefit disposals" for surplus federal property under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949.

The proposal embodies one of the recommendations of the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime. It would authorize the Administrator of the General Services Administration to transfer to the states, the District of Columbia, the Trust Territories of the Pacific and U.S. commonwealths, or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof, surplus property determined by the Attorney General to be required for correctional facility use by the recipient. Property must be used only under a program or project for the care or rehabilitation of criminal offenders as approved by the Attorney General. Transfers would be made without payment by recipients.

Appropriate programs could include any state correctional agency, a county jail, halfway house, work-release facility, training facility, prison support service or any activity directly contributing to the care or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. The prison needs clearinghouse of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons would serve as the agency through which the Attorney General screens proposed property transfers.

The Grassely bill is currently on the Senate calendar awaiting final floor action. Meanwhile, similar legislation is being considered by the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Government Activities and Transportation. The latest measure to be considered in the House is H.R.6207, introduced April 28 by Representatives Leo C. Zeferetti (D-NY), John L. Burton (D-CA) and Robert S. Walker (R-PA).

OTHER LEGISLATIVE NEWS

- Prospects for passage of comprehensive criminal code revisions this year are now described as dim as a result of the inability of Senate leaders to bring S.1630, the Criminal Code Reform Act, to the floor for debate April 27. "Too many members of Congress don't want to face these hot issues this year; that's the bottom line," Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) said after the Senate failed to muster the 60 votes needed to bring the measure to the floor.

- The resignation of one member and the death of another has forced significant changes to the makeup of the House Judiciary Committee. Representative George Danielson (D-CA), Chairman of the Administrative Law and Governmental Regulations Subcommittee, resigned in March to accept a California judgeship. Assuming the chair of the Administrative Law Subcommittee is Representative Sam B. Hall (D-TX). Representative George Crockett (D-MI) has been recruited to serve on the full committee and took Hall's spot on the Criminal Justice Subcommittee. Representative Dan Glickman (D-KS) was named to fill Hall's position on the Crime Subcommittee. The death of Representative John Ashbrook (R-OH) in April created a vacancy on the minority side which has yet to be filled. Ashbrook was a member of the Crime Subcommittee.

- The Senate Judiciary Committee has approved S.1940, amending federal extradition laws. Among other things, the bill would permit the U.S. to secure a warrant for the arrest of a foreign fugitive even though the fugitive's whereabouts is not known, sets forth steps to be followed in instituting court proceedings necessary for extradition, and establishes procedures for waiver of extradition.

PRISON POPULATION INCREASED 12.1% IN 1981, BJS REPORTS

There were nearly 40,000 more inmates in the nation's prisons at the end of 1981 than there were when the year began, the Bureau of Justice Statistics said May 2. This 12.1% growth in prison population, to a total of 369,009, represents the largest single-year increase since data became available in 1925.

Between 1980 and 1981, the incarceration rate of sentenced prisoners rose from 139 to 154 per 100,000 U.S. residents. "We believe the sharp increase can be attributed to recent changes in sentencing laws and sentencing practices," Benjamin H. Renshaw, BJS Acting Director, explained. "Mandatory imprisonment for certain offenses, especially violent crimes, and determinate sentencing, which generally precludes parole, are increasing the pressure on correctional administrators."

The bulk of the increase in prisoners occurred in state institutions, which held an additional 36,000 inmates at year's end, BJS said. Behind this growth were measures reflecting a sterner public attitude toward crime and criminals. During the past five years, 37 states have passed mandatory sentencing laws and 11 states have passed determinate sentencing statutes, both of which frequently result in a longer average time served than indeterminate sentences. Many states have adopted more stringent regulations on the use of parole, and four states have abolished it altogether.

During 1981, prison populations increased in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Only Michigan, which released prisoners under its new emergency "rollback" law, reported a decline of 1%. Nearly half of the growth occurred in California, New York, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Maryland and Illinois, each of which added more than 1,600 new inmates in 1981.

For a copy of the report, write Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 633 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20531.

MAYORS SEE CRIME INCREASE DUE TO CUTS IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

The nation's cities could be scenes of increased youth crime and violence this summer as a result of severe unemployment problems and the effects of planned government cuts in the Summer Youth Employment Program. So says the U.S. Conference of Mayors in an April 26 report to the Congressional Joint Economic Committee.

Over half of the 125 cities surveyed said they fear that youth crime, in one form or another, will increase as a result of SYEP reductions and overall economic conditions this summer. "In cities from coast to coast, in all regions of the country, officials speak of increased youth crime, of delinquency, of vandalism, of gang activity," the survey found. The reason offered is the same in most cases: "This summer there will be fewer youth served in employment programs, fewer youth employed, and more youth on the street with nothing to do."

Government unemployment statistics for March put joblessness among all teenagers at about 22%. For black and other minority teens age 16 to 19, the count is much higher — over 42%, seasonally adjusted. As the summer approaches, youth unemployment could worsen, according to the Mayors Conference. In the face of this serious youth unemployment problem, SYEP has been reduced in fiscal year 1982 and proposed for elimination in fiscal year 1983.

Findings are compiled in a report entitled "Youth Unemployment in the Summer of '82: A Survey of 125 Cities." For information, contact Mike Brown, U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1620 I Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE NEWS BRIEFS

Reagan Creates Task Force on Victims of Crime. A Task Force on Victims of Crime, charged with reviewing national, state and local policies and programs affecting victims, was created by President Reagan April 23. Working with the Cabinet Council on Legal Policy, the task force will report to the President and the Attorney General later this year on ways to improve government efforts to assist and protect victims of crime. The task force, created by Executive Order 12360, will be composed of members from public and private life with expertise in victims' rights. Support will come from a professional staff of four and budget resources furnished by the Justice Department. Chairing the task force will be Lois Herrington, who served as Deputy District Attorney of Alameda County, California, from 1976 to 1981.

OJJDP Special Emphasis Program Falls Short of Potential, GAO Says. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention needs to establish new policies and procedures for its Special Emphasis Program which recognize that research/demonstration and service delivery initiatives should be designed and managed differently, the General Accounting Office said in an April 16 report. Current policies and procedures primarily address service delivery and virtually ignore research/demonstration, GAO said. OJJDP should devise R&D initiatives which are based on research results, the investigators recommended. Evaluation should be made an integral part of R&D initiatives. For a free copy of "The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Special Emphasis Program Has Not Realized Its Full Potential," contact GAO, Document Handling and Information Services Facility, Box 6015, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20760, (202) 275-6241.

California Voters To Consider Criminal Justice Initiative June 8. Voters in California will be voting on a controversial statewide comprehensive criminal justice referendum June 8. The measure covers restitution, school violence, evidence, pretrial release, use of prior felony convictions, diminished capacity, the insanity plea, habitual offenders, sentencing, parole, plea bargaining and several other issues. Because of its broad scope, the initiative, known as Proposition 8, will have "serious impact on our criminal justice system and on state and local budgets," Terry Goggin, who chairs the California Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice, says. Among other things, Goggin opposes the initiative on grounds it would "hamper" criminal justice prosecutions, "frustrate" victims, impose $750 million in new uncompensated costs on local government each year, and further overcrowd prisons.

Thompson Proposes New Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Governor James Thompson has signed a state Executive Order to create a new Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority charged with statewide planning and crime prevention information responsibilities. Thompson's order is subject to review by the state legislature before June 1. Should state lawmakers approve, ICJIA would come into being April 1, 1983, and inheret most of its powers and duties from two predecessor agencies — the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission, which formerly administered the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and juvenile justice programs, and the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Council. Legislature is considering a separate proposal to transfer juvenile justice responsibilities to the Department of Children and Family Services.

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