

**CHIEF JUSTICE RICHARD A. ROBINSON RECEIVES RECOMMENDATIONS FROM  
JURY SELECTION TASK FORCE; PRAISES COMPREHENSIVE REPORT  
JANUARY 12, 2021**

Recently received recommendations from the Judicial Branch's [Jury Selection Task Force](#) are a huge step forward toward eradicating racial bias in the jury system, and efforts are already underway to bring about change, Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson said today.

“I’ve completed a preliminary review of [the report](#), and the recommendations are excellent and extensive,” he said. “At this point, I anticipate implementing many of them, and I believe they will have a profound effect on our ability to ensure fair and impartial justice for all. In fact, we have already filed legislation to get things rolling.”

Based on the task force’s recommendations, the proposed legislation would increase the pool of eligible people to serve as jurors, including legal permanent residents who are not citizens and individuals with felony convictions, who now must wait seven years before being allowed to do so. The legislation also would adjust the method for summoning jurors to ensure that they reflect a fair cross-section of the population in their respective judicial districts. Other recommendations are outlined in the bill’s summary.

“Our hope is to make changes as quickly as we can,” Chief Justice Robinson added. “However, we also need to make sure that we take the time to do it right.”

The Supreme Court, in 2019, commissioned the task force via its ruling in *State v. Evan Jaron Holmes*. According to the ruling, the task force was to include

“relevant stakeholders in the criminal justice and civil litigation communities, to study the issue of racial discrimination in the selection of juries, to consider measures intended to promote the selection of diverse jury panels, and to propose necessary changes, to be implemented by court rule or legislation, to the jury selection process in Connecticut.”

Chief Justice Robinson appointed his predecessor, retired Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers (now a partner at Day Pitney in Hartford), and Superior Court Judge Omar A. Williams to chair the task force. Members came from a wide swath and were all committed to the same goal of eliminating racial bias from the jury selection process.

“There are not enough words for me to thank retired Chief Justice Rogers, Judge Williams and every other person who served on the task force,” Chief Justice Robinson said. “This was a heavy lift in a relatively short period of time – and, I might add, during a pandemic. The report they completed is nothing short of remarkable.”

The task force was divided into four subcommittees, each with a specific charge and focus. Recommendations from all four subcommittees are included in the report, ranging from collecting information regarding jury selection at every stage of the process to enable the Judicial Branch and others to ascertain the points at which prospective jurors exit the selection process; sending a replacement summons to the same zip code from which a summons is determined to be undeliverable and ultimately calculating how many summonses will be sent to a town/city based on previous yields; and encouraging attorneys

and law students to assist as volunteers in the Jury Outreach Program's presentations on jury service.

Other recommendations include the revision of the criminal jury instruction about implicit bias, a new court rule intended to eliminate the unfair exclusion of potential jurors based upon race or ethnicity, showing jurors selected for jury service a short video that explains implicit bias, and providing an explicit notice to jurors that they will receive reimbursement for expenses for family care and transportation.

For further information, please contact the External Affairs Division at 860-757-2270.