Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Welcome and good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the national launch of Justice Counts. My name is Michael Boggs, and I'm the presiding justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia. I also proudly serve as chair of the Justice Count's national steering committee. We're so happy to have hundreds of you turning in today across the country to mark the launch of an exciting new initiative, Justice Counts. Justice Counts is a bold nationwide initiative that seeks to strengthen states' criminal justice data. Today you'll hear more about what that means and what will do it. Today's event is hosted by the Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

We have a great program lined up for you today, and I can assure you one thing. Over the course of the next hour, you're going to hear the word data, a lot over and over. But remember this when we say data. We're not talking about data, but we're actually talking about people. When we say data, we're talking about information, information that policymakers need to make informed decisions. When we say data, we're talking about insights that lead to public accountability and strengthen public safety.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

A couple of housekeeping matters before we get into our program today. I want to share with you two quick housekeeping items for everyone watching today's broadcast. First, we encourage you to join in today's discussion with comments or questions. You can do this in two ways, on social media using the hashtag #justicecounts or in the [inaudible 00:01:33] comments box at the bottom of your screen. Our team is standing by to respond. Finally, a recording and a transcript of today's events will be made available on the Justice Counts website in the coming days.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Now it is my distinct pleasure and honor to welcome our keynote speaker, United States Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta. On April 21st of last year, Miss Gupta was confirmed as the 19th United States Associate Attorney General, the third ranking office and official at the Department of Justice. Previously, she served as a the president and chief executive officer of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and as the acting assistant attorney general of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. She began her legal career as an attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and served as Deputy Legal Director and Director of the Center for Justice at the ACLU. She is an incredibly skilled and effective leader and a litigator who has spent her entire career championing civil rights and criminal justice reform. Associate Attorney General Gupta, it is my honor to welcome you today.

Vanita Gupta:

Thank you, Justice Boggs, for that kind introduction. It's a pleasure to be with all of you this afternoon. Thank you to all who helped make today's launch possible, my Justice Department colleagues, the outstanding team at the Council of State Governments Justice Center, our 21 national partners, and everyone tuning in with an interest in strengthening our criminal justice system. It's a true privilege to join you and to help kick off this exciting initiative.

Vanita Gupta:

I want to thank Justice Boggs for his leadership as chair of the Justice Counts steering committee and for guiding us to this moment. My thanks as well to Megan Quattlebaum, Marshall Clement, and the staff and advisory board from the Council of State Governments. Of course, thanks to my colleagues in our Bureau of Justice Assistance, especially Kristin Mahoney, Ruby Qazilbash, and Heather Tubman-Carbone, and a big shout-out to my friend Amy Solomon, the head of our Office of Justice Programs.

Vanita Gupta:

When it comes to most public policy issues, jobs, health, education, the environment, Americans can generally trust that their elected leaders are operating with complete, consistent, and up to date information. But criminal justice is another story. The data we have about public safety, whether it's information about arrest rates, jail populations, or probation and parole is often months, if not years old. In many cases, the data exists, but no one has had time or resources to analyze it and share what they find with those who need to know. So our legislators, policymakers, and budget agencies are forced to make critical decisions in a vacuum, and sensational narratives are permitted to run wild without official, real-time statistics to confirm or dispute those narratives. This erodes public confidence in our public safety strategies and undermines trust in the criminal justice system itself.

Vanita Gupta:

The foundation of our justice system should rest on bedrock principles of fairness, effectiveness, and efficiency. Justice and equity demand that we constantly seek to improve the system's operations and that we operate with transparency. But if we can't measure even the most fundamental actions of law enforcement, corrections, and other criminal justice professionals, how can we diagnose and fix the shortcomings? The better equipped we are with timely data, the more effective we can be serving our communities, and the better able we will be to secure the trust and confidence of those we serve.

Vanita Gupta:

This is what Justice Counts is all about, leveraging the data we have to help leaders make informed fiscal and policy decisions without expensive upgrades in technology and manpower. We're already on the road to achieving this elusive and important goal. The data scan on Justice Counts website serves as a blueprint for what we are hoping to accomplish. It consolidates key corrections metrics published across all 50 states. This will help stakeholders locate timely information, identify critical gaps in data, and understand how components work as part of the system.

Vanita Gupta:

Our next step is to work with our partners to develop a set of metrics and tools to enable this for every part of the system. Then we can help states apply this data to their decision-making. You'll hear more about our strategy over the next hour and a half, but before we discuss these next steps and dive into specifics, we want to take a moment to hear from those who depend on this information, the practitioners, the policymakers, and people who have had direct experience with the justice system. After all, every statistic represents someone for whom sound, reliable data can make a difference. So let's hear from them now.

Megan Quattlebaum:

When it comes to critical issues like economics and public health, Americans generally trust that their elective leaders are operating with up to date information.

Marsha Curry-Nixon:

But criminal justice is a different story

Senator Whitney Westerfield:

For a system that is vast, complex, and expensive, elected leaders and the public have so little information.

Captain Lee Eby:

The justice system should be built upon the principles of fairness, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Amy Bach:

You can't change what you can't measure.

Justin Forkner:

We need more timely data so we can move quickly.

Romain L. Alexander:

We need actionable insights to make better informed decisions.

Anne L. Precythe:

To deliver better justice, we need better data. Safety and justice deserve better data.

Marsha Curry-Nixon:

Justice Counts is a movement made up of an unprecedented coalition of state and local leaders ...

Mary Jo McGuire:

... from every corner of our nation's state, county, and municipal justice systems ...

Chief Paul Williams:

... law enforcement leaders and officers ...

Sheila Polk:

... district attorneys, prosecutors, and states' attorneys ...

April Frazier Camara:

... defense attorneys, and public defenders ...

Ruby Qazilbash:

... people who care ...

Olivia Koukoui:

... mothers, fathers, families, and children.

Kristen Mahoney:

We are committed to improving how data is used to understand and guide our justice system to dramatically improve people's lives ...

Commissioner Michael Nail:

... and dramatically improve the safety of our communities.

Anne Jordan:

We are ready to be part of the solution.

Mandy Lambert:

Justice Counts is a belief that a better justice system is possible ...

Megan Quattlebaum:

... a justice system that is fair ...

Abigale Jasinsky:

... effective ...

Shelby Kerns:

... efficient ...

Humphrey Obuobi:

... and person-centric.

Amy Solomon:

A better justice system is possible. Safety and justice deserve better data.

Kareemah Hanifa:

My community counts.

Tony Kitchens:

My community counts.

Chris Poulos:

People count.

Tony Kitchens:

I count.

Kareemah Hanifa:

I count.

Anne L. Precythe:

Justice counts.

April Frazier Camara:

Justice counts.

Tony Kitchens:

Justice counts.

Mandy Lambert:

Justice counts.

Chief Paul Williams:

Justice counts.

Romain L. Alexander:

Justice counts.

Chief Paul Williams:

Justice counts.

Kareemah Hanifa:

Justice counts.

Abigale Jasinsky:

Justice counts.

Senator Whitney Westerfield:

Justice counts.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

Now that's an inspiring vision. That is the criminal justice system that we should aspire to. Thank you for joining us today. I'm Heather Tubman-Carbone, a senior policy advisor with the Bureau of Justice Assistance. I'm joined for this presentation by Ben Shelor from the Council of State Government Justice Center. Today we're going to talk about the criminal justice system we have, the one we could have that you just heard about, and the steps we can take to get there. To close the gap between here and there, we need to consider a few things. What is the challenge for policymakers, what is the Justice Count strategy, and how can you get involved?

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

We'll begin with a vision and a problem. Everyone wants a system that's more fair, effective, and efficient. To make our system more fair, we need data to help us spotlight where inequities exist. To make our system more effective, we need data to help measure what's working to improve safety and

justice and what isn't. To make our system more efficient, we need data on how much those different efforts cost our system. But too often, decisions are based on anecdote, and they should be grounded in data. Unfortunately, that shines a spotlight on a longstanding problem. We need better data.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

So what are the key challenges with getting this kind of criminal justice data into the hands of leaders and policymakers who are eager to make improvements? This is not a problem born of negligence. It's the natural result of complexities of the system. Data are often stale. By the time it reaches the desk of policymakers, data are outdated, months or sometimes years old. This is quite different from other sectors, like labor, where we get jobs numbers each month and know how many people are employed, unemployed, and how that's changing.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

Our data are submerged. Key data are often buried in reports, making it difficult for policymakers to find and use. Agencies have a ton of data they collect, but don't make available to policymakers, and our data are scattered. In order to understand how well the justice system is working, policymakers have to request, review, and synthesize data from across hundreds of agencies within the state, these reports, those websites, that dashboard, that report in Peter's office, and that spreadsheet that Molly keeps down the hall. Even if they find it all, even if all of those agency staff work to provide it, policymakers are still left comparing apples to oranges.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

Why does this problem matter? Because better data can fuel more effective reforms to our systems of safety and justice. Without better data, it's harder to agree on the problem. Without better data, it is hard to analyze how changes might impact people and outcomes. Without better data, it's hard to evaluate programs and measure progress.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

The criminal justice system is comprised of a series of systems. Agencies may do similar work, but they often function independently. Agencies working in tandem report their data in different ways, in different places. The siloed nature of our criminal justice operations means that it's impossible to get an accurate and comprehensive report of what is happening and, importantly, whether it's working. Policymakers need a way to see each agency as part of the whole. We need tools and infrastructure to approach it accordingly as a connected set of points along a process that begins and ends in our communities.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

Of course, we have to remember, we're not just talking about one system. We're talking about 50 state criminal justice systems and over 3,000 county or similar systems that operate within them. State policymakers need this better data, and our communities need policymakers to have that better data and a cohesive picture to make more informed decisions about public safety. We believe safety and justice deserve better data, and we know you agree. In our work across the country, we see you and we hear you, working in every part of the system to do more and to do better, specifically to understand what is or is not working, to understand why and to make improvements. But these challenges with data get in the way of progress.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

So what are we going to do about it? At the Bureau of Justice Assistance, it's part of our job to support states and localities they're in with strategies and tools to build their capacity. We developed the Justice Counts initiative to provide everyone with tools and resources that you need to make criminal justice data more accessible and useful for policymakers in your states. Through this major, multi-year effort, the field will be building a blueprint for metrics to collect and share at every point in that case processing continuum to build tools and support for state and local leaders to put them to work. We are proud to partner with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, a membership association of state leaders from all three branches of government, to co-lead this initiative. I will now turn things over to Ben to discuss our strategy and the partners who've signed on to make it a reality.

Ben Shelor:

Great. Thank you, Heather. We're thrilled about our partnership with BJA and all the other outstanding organizations who share the conviction that safety and justice deserve better data. This includes over a dozen associations representing state and local officials from across the country. These partners will ensure that the Justice Counts meets the needs of and can be adopted by those working across every part of the system and in every state. We're also privileged to count a number of national research, technical assistance, and technology providers among our partners. These partners play vital roles in building the Justice Counts metrics and tools.

Ben Shelor:

Justice Counts is led by a national steering committee comprised of state and local practitioners, making sure we are building from the ground up instead of from the top down. They're all leaders in their fields, and together they represent agencies of diverse missions, sizes, and geographies.

Ben Shelor:

Together we've developed our strategy carefully and thoughtfully. We've done our homework. We've reviewed past efforts and studied what's worked and what hasn't to craft our way forward. As you can see, this is a multi-pronged approach to provide tools and resources to improve how criminal justice data are made available to policymakers and to make our justice system more fair, effective, and efficient. Justice Counts is not a national data collection effort. It is a blueprint and an infrastructure to help states make better use of data that are already collected.

Ben Shelor:

So how do we do this? Well, first we must understand the landscape. This means scanning public data, assessing what data criminal justice agencies are and are not already reporting publicly. Next, we're developing an initial set of metrics that all justice agencies should use to make available to policymakers. Then Justice Council built tools that enable states to quickly and easily bring metrics from across agencies together, organize them, and share them. Finally, we'll help state leaders take action and use the metrics and the tools to understand how well their system is operating and where to focus attention to improve safety and justice.

Ben Shelor:

We put the strategy to the test and are proud to demonstrate the concept and make our first product available to the field. The Justice Counts corrections data scans are active now on the Justice Counts

website. They focus on two key areas of the system. We know state agencies are already publishing some key data, corrections and community supervision. The scan offers a look at only the back end of this system, but this is the part of the system that costs states and their taxpayers the most. In fiscal year 2021, it's estimated that over $66 billion was spent by states on corrections. We determined if agencies in each state publicly report eight key indicators, such as standing population, admissions, releases, revocations, and the like. For those agencies that did report them publicly, we also looked at the frequency with which they were reported. On the data scan site, each state has its own page showing reporting status for each indicator and, if available, the most recent reported number for each of those indicators. This information is laid out in a manner that makes it clear and useful for policymakers.

Ben Shelor:

As an example, let's look briefly at probation. Probation is the most often imposed sentence, and there are 3 million people on probation across the 50-

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:17:04]

Ben Shelor:

Most often imposed sentence, and there are 3 million people on probation across the 50 states. If you look a little further at what happens to people after beginning probation, you can see 29 states do not publicly report revocation numbers. How many people are unsuccessful on probation and are ultimately incarcerated, is not known. These numbers are remarkable for two reasons. We've seen some improvement in reporting, even since the release of the Justice Counts data scan in August of 2021.

Ben Shelor:

First, agencies in several states are now publicly reporting indicators that they were not previously. Just the process of engaging agency leadership on this has led to several reactions of, "Wait, we do have that," or, "Hold on, we haven't updated information. We just don't know how or where to share." Secondly, our system is doing a better job telling us what's happening than whether it's working. Ultimately, Justice Counts will provide tools to improve on both fronts.

Ben Shelor:

Just because data is available doesn't mean it's going to be used. By gathering up and organizing the data made available by states, policymakers can more easily see what data they need to still access and can put the data they have to work. Here we see data are no longer scattered, stale or submerged. This [inaudible 00:18:12] approach also helps to make these data more actionable. Data are simply less actionable if they're scattered across multiple reports, too stale to show current trends or too submerged to be easily accessible for policymakers.

Ben Shelor:

We'll provide a similar and easy to use tool for states to pull together across their agencies as well. Of course the question is, what data to include. For their partnership measures for justice, Justice Counts is working on identifying a set of metrics to use at each major point in the criminal justice system from reported crime to release from prison. Combined, these metrics will paint a high level picture of how people are moving through a state's criminal justice system, where the money is being spent and how a system is performing in the most important ways. As Heather referenced, agencies are awash in data

they collect on a regular often daily basis, but only a small fraction of this is put to use by leaders and policymakers.

Ben Shelor:

Justice Counts can help point everyone in the same direction when it comes to which of these data are most important for policy and budgetary decisions. Our challenge here is to balance what policymakers want and need, and to know what agencies can reasonably supply in a timely way. To do this, first, we did our homework on what's been attempted before and when it comes to developing and implementing metrics. Second, rather than write the metrics ourselves, we created subcommittees to work with us and filled those subcommittees with state and local practitioners and partners. They appreciate what and how data are commonly collected, analyze, report it and used in each area of the system.

Ben Shelor:

As we develop these metrics, each must pass two litmus tests. One, is it useful to policymakers? And two, is it feasible for most agencies in that area of the field? The initial set of Justice Counts metrics will be approved by the national steering committee and be released in the spring of this year. You'll have the metrics, then we'll give you technology infrastructure that every state can adopt and implement. Our partners at recidivism are working closely with us to develop an open source, web-based tool that states can administer and enable every justice agency to log in and enter those few core metrics and have them organized alongside other agencies in your state. This way, state leaders can look in just one place.

Ben Shelor:

We will not have to go it alone. Justice Counts will help leaders take action by providing direct assistance to states. Every state is in a different place with regard to their data so the initiative must meet them where they are. We will help states set and then meet their own goals. We'll develop and implement a tailored approach that takes into account each state's specific needs and challenges, as we support their adoption of Justice Counts. This might include issuing executive orders, establishing inter-branch task forces, charging an existing or new office with coordinating Justice Counts efforts in your state or engaging your state level associations of local justice agencies as partners.

Ben Shelor:

None of this will happen without leadership at the state and local levels. Leadership that believes in safety and justices deserve better data. Leadership that will make better data and priority for everyone. Leadership that will put data to use, to realize a more fair, effective, and efficient system of safety and justice in their state. Justice Counts partners will engage and assist leaders at all levels of the criminal justice system to join a campaign for better data, charge their entities with adopting Justice Counts metrics and putting the data to use. With that, I'll turn it back to Heather to talk about what you can do to get informed, get on board and get ready.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

Thanks, Ben. In short, here's how you can help realize better data for safety and justice. First, get informed and get connected by visiting the Justice Counts website, exploring your state's data and signing up to receive updates on the project. Then, get your state and agency on board by telling them and others about Justice Counts. Building commitments by agencies to make more data available and

using the forthcoming Justice Counts metrics, and then get your state ready by taking action. Ben mentioned earlier some potential actions that state leaders can take. Please reach out to us to start that conversation.

Dr. Heather Tubman-Carbone:

Today, our criminal justice data is often too stale, submerged and scattered. That's because of how our system is structured across states, counties and all three branches of government. No single agency created these challenges. Working together, every agency can be part of the solution to deliver better data for improving safety and justice. With that, I will turn us back to Justice Michael Boggs, and a panel of our Justice Counts national steering committee to bring these ideals to life about what goes on in their states.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Thank you, Dr. Tubman-Carbone and Mr. Shelor. I'd like to now turn our attention to our panel discussion segment and introduce our panelists. Today's panelists all serve on the Justice Counts National Steering Committee. They are also state practitioners who are also some of our nation's staunchest champions for stronger data. We are grateful for them for taking the time out of their busy schedules to share their insights on this critical topic. And panelists, as I introduce each of you, I invite you to turn on your video and join the conversation.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

I begin by welcoming Captain Lee Eby. Mr. Eby serves as captain of the Clackamas County Sheriff's office in Oregon, and is the appointed commander of the Clackamas County Jail. He's a certified jail inspector for the state of Oregon and has served as president of the Oregon Sheriff's Jail Command Council. Captain Eby is currently on the executive board for the Clackamas county chapter of the National Alliance of the Mentally Ill. Welcome Captain Eby.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Next, I'd like to introduce and welcome Dr. Beth Skinner. Dr. Skinner has served as director of the Iowa Department of Corrections since 2019. She brings experience as a residential officer and as a certified Iowa peace officer on the high risk unit and as a supervisor. She's managed workforce development programs, mental health reentry, and educational programs to support reentry success. And we're honored to have Dr. Beth Skinner join us today. Welcome Dr. Skinner.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Next and lastly, I'd like to introduce state representative, Toni Walker from Connecticut. Please welcome Dr. Walker, a Connecticut state representative. She's proudly served in as a representative in New Haven in the Connecticut House of Representatives since 2001. And she currently serves as a member of the Connecticut Judiciary Committee and as a house chair of the Appropriations Committee. A seasoned social activist, Representative Walker is a proud champion for juvenile justice reform in Connecticut. Representative Walker, welcome to our conversation today.

Representative Toni Walker:

Thank you, sir. And thank you for inviting me.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Let's begin our conversation and get right with it for conversations with each of you panelists. In the opening presentation, Dr. Tubman-Carbone talked about some of the challenges with criminal justice data. She characterized these data as stale or submerged, or scattered. I really want to start with a big round of round-robin, if you will. A question for each of us to answer, and that question is this, what is an example of a piece of data that policymakers should have that is collected already by agencies, but is often not reported publicly? And I'll start with you, Dr. Skinner, if you can respond to that question.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Well, thank you, Justice Boggs for that kind introduction and I'm very excited to be here with the esteemed panel and this opportunity to talk with everyone around Justice Counts. For us at the Iowa Department of Correction and a good example would be average length of stay, is just one example of whether it'd be a prison or community-based corrections. When I say length of stay, I mean, how long an individual stays on supervision. Legislators and a lot of prosecutors, defense attorneys contact DOC when this information is readily available, even though other agencies carry this information such as the Criminal Juvenile Justice Planning and the Board of Parole. However, the data is not reported publicly. And this type of information, we believe is very important because it directly relates to population management, budgeting, programming, movement, and reentry.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Well, that's wonderful. Thank you Dr. Skinner for that response. Now, let's turn to Representative Walker.

Representative Toni Walker:

Thank you Justice Boggs and thank you for this kind introduction also, and I'm so excited to be here with my colleagues too. In Connecticut, recently, we have done a lot in juvenile justice and that's been a focus that I've been working on. And what we'd found was we started looking at the different offenses that kids were committing and we looked at how many kids were actually going through the judicial system, how many times was it done non-judiciously, or how many times was it released instead of going into the system? This helped us to go through the different charges that people had for kids such as larceny six, which is basically $250 theft in a 7-Eleven store or something, or a breach of peace, which is basically a child having a temper tantrum.

Representative Toni Walker:

What we want to do is make sure that these types of charges don't bring a child into the criminal justice system, but we divert them to services so that we provide public safety for everybody so that, when we look at each one of the charges, we are doing something that's going to make change for our kids to make sure that they grow and thrive in a better environment, so that's what we've been doing with Connecticut's data.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

It's terrific work. Thank you for your work there, Representative Walker. Captain Eby, can you please share an example from Oregon?

Captain Lee Eby:

Thank you, Justice Boggs. I appreciate the introduction. I'm humbled to be on such a great panel with all of my co-presenters. As kind of was mentioned earlier was that, when we're talking about data, we're talking about people. And the one question that we get a lot here is the underlying rates of substance addiction and mental health disorders are those people who are involved all in the criminal justice system. Oftentimes, this data is kind of across both jail information, public health information, hospitals, for those individuals who are high utilizers and trying to develop great programs to have good outcomes really requires that type of data so we know what we're affecting and who in our system, the data, the people, we can create a system that focuses on them to, again, have that good outcome.

Captain Lee Eby:

Oftentimes, in Oregon, we get a lot of questions. From our legislators is, where do we need to spend money for programs to be effective? And we really need to know about the people that are in the system. And those are two areas that I see a lot of questions on.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Thank you, captain. Obviously very important, all of those items of data. And in Georgia, during the years of Criminal Justice Reform during 2012 to 2018, I had personally really seen the challenges in Georgia of acquiring data that might be collected, but not publicly reported. Some of that was within the Department of Corrections reports where they list the prison population monthly, but there's really no indication of the number of admissions or releases to parole, for example, on a particular monthly basis. I also looked, during those years, at monthly statistical profiles. A report, if you will, that includes some of that information, but it's 78 pages long. It contains a ton of information, but it's really dense and complex. It would take me a while to find exactly what I was looking for, even if it was a pretty simple information.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

I know our friends at the Department of Community Supervision are also working on a number of dashboards that would really help us in the future and inform more about those that are on community supervision in our state. For now, it's clear, we obviously have some work to do. Thank you for your answers to that question.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Let me turn to a second question, which is that we keep hearing safety and justice deserve better data. We hear that compared, for example, to other sectors, criminal justice data lags far behind. Now, I want to hear and better understand how we got here. Why is criminal justice data not kept pace with other sectors. Dr. Skinner, can you speak to that?

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Absolutely. This is for different reasons. First, the criminal justice system is large and very decentralized. It's put between agencies accountable to cities, counties, state, and even the federal government. There are thousands and thousands of agencies across the country, each operating in their own way, which is probably no surprise to anyone here. This also means that agencies collect different information. They define key terms differently, maintain the data in different systems or spaces and so on. It makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to present a timely picture of what is happening across our criminal justice system. To me, in my personal opinion, here is the end result from this is inconsistent reporting

of metrics and how we identify them, system inefficiencies, and it ends up hampering us in making data-driven decisions.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Yeah. And it's really important. You talk about siloed information or segregated information in the justice system. It's so complicated, I think, as you alluded to, because while some of these data are being collected, they're being collected in separate spots, and oftentimes those agencies don't communicate across themselves. It's very difficult to disaggregate the data and glean it from the several places in which it resides. Representative Walker, Connecticut is widely regarded as having a particularly strong commitment to collecting and sharing these criminal justice data. Why are these data so important and useful to you and your colleagues and, how does really better data lead to better policymaking?

Representative Toni Walker:

Well, thank you for that question. Back in 2005, when we started in Connecticut to do legislative work on Criminal Justice Reform, we mandated agencies to report data to a designated office, and we established this office so that we could compile all data in one area and gather different information points. From that, we produced statewide reports for policymakers, because as policymakers, we needed to understand what exactly were the conclusions that were coming from the data. Criminal justice trends from crime and arrest or incarceration and release, are updated monthly and reviewed by the justice system leaders and the legislators alike. Having a consistent state system-wide monthly updates is keeps data driving the conversation, not any anecdotal situations that tend to get to the newspapers as opposed to what the legislators need to do, good system development and create good laws in our statutes. Thank you.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Thank you, representative. Really appreciate...

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:34:04]

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Thank you, Representative. Really appreciate that insight on the importance of how this drives better policy-making and how these data need to be shared. I want to turn to another question directed to both Captain Eby and Director Skinner. I'd like to direct this question particularly to the both of you. The policy-makers and others in Oregon and Iowa routinely ask for data. Are they even asking for the data, and how much staff time and resources does it take within your agencies or departments to satisfy those requests? Captain Eby, why don't you answer that first?

Captain Lee Eby:

Well, thank you. It is extremely routine here in Oregon for the legislature and also local governments, such as the county commissioners, to ask for data regularly, especially at the end or at the beginning of budget years. So we take a lot of those requests and we move them forward because of that impact not only on policy decisions, but also on the fiscal considerations that both the state and local government have to make to fund programs and they want to be effective. Oftentimes, though, the issue that comes is that these requests are a company with comparatory requests. They want to know, what are other jurisdictions doing? What are other numbers? What are they seeing? And that is where not only the local numbers for our own facility become staff intensive, but then we're going out and trying to find

more from other jurisdictions, and that takes a lot of staff time and time from those other jurisdictions. That's really where Justice Counts becomes a huge benefit of collecting and ensuring everybody is talking on the same page. So it is a huge part of our yearly, sometimes daily, routines to get that data to those policy-makers.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Yeah, that's very insightful. Having served in the legislature, I know the questions that come out around appropriations time are quite common, but they're also quite burdensome, and finding these data is often difficult for the person being requested to provide it. Director Skinner, I'd like to hear from you on this question. Do policy-makers ask your office for data, and can you talk about the resources necessary to satisfy those requests?

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Yes. Thanks, Justice Boggs. Absolutely. We get asked for data on a regular basis from legislators, from the public, from the media, you name it. Comes from all different places. But even though we get asked on a regular basis, people have to understand it's a complex process if done right.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

So let me tell you what that really means is that it's very... First, it's very important to be clear what specifically policy-makers are asking for and ask for clarity regarding these requests. I'll give you more background here in a second. There have been many instances, in my experience and an experience as a research director, where we think we know what they want, but it wasn't what they wanted, the data they're asking for. Many times, people ask for specific data points and polls. Sometimes it's more important to actually ask the requester, what question are they trying to answer? That's a big piece, because otherwise these research departments do a ton of work and they're not even answering the right question. So starting out of the gates is asking the question, whether it's the legislator, it's the public, whoever they may be, what are they trying to answer? If you start by asking the request or that question they're trying to answer, your data analysis team likely knows best how to pull and represent the question they want to answer.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Second, you need to have a centralized data system where data can be inputted by staff, not these different data platforms and things like that. Third, you need trained staff to extract the data to ensure that the data's being pulled consistently across staff, because everyone has their hands in the candy jar, if you will, because they all are on the same system. Fourth, you must have quality controls in place to make sure that data is clean. And finally, with multiple agencies, especially in their prisons and CBCs here in Iowa, we need to ensure they are operationalizing the data in the same manner. So as you can see, there's a lot of level of complexity into getting it right and the lift to get good, accurate, and consistent data.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Yeah, and informing them about the right data, correct? It's oftentimes that you get asked for mountains of information supposedly to inform policy-makers, but having them ask the right question and a question that would really fully inform that policy is the key, and having that data accessible is really what Justice Counts is all about. So thank you, Director Skinner. I appreciate your response.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Let's now turn to a question that's centered more on the importance... I think a good segue in the importance of existing data. So the shortcomings of the criminal justice data aren't really new and haven't gone unnoticed, but Justice Counts really offers something new by providing this direction, if you will, and resources to policy-makers, agency leaders, and the public. And it really builds on existing data rather than really reinventing the wheel. I'd like for each of you to answer this question, why do you think building upon existing data rather than reinventing the wheel will be important to the success of Justice Counts? Representative Walker, if you could respond first, please.

Representative Toni Walker:

Thank you. Thank you, Justice Boggs, for that question. The most important thing is we have to look at the trends and we have to look at what has happened historically in our states to see, how did that affect you? What were the things, the conclusions that we made? Taking historical data and being able to show the trends over at least a five or a 10 year gives you a better understanding of what things need and have to be changed in order to change that trajectory of where you're going. When you were talking earlier with my colleagues here about how did the legislature impact and the legislature and the data look for supports and directions, it's looking at the trends to make sure that we are going in the right direction. And you're right; we don't always ask. I'm a legislator, and I'm also House Chair of Appropriations, so all of those are very, very common for me. When we ask these questions, I want to know that what I'm doing is going in areas that are going to help affect change, especially when it comes to the budget. So we need to make sure that the things that we ask for and how we look at them have already had footprint, and that's the footprint that we want to change in going forward. The data with historical information helps us to do a much better job in the all-around.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Well, thank you, Representative Walker. Very insightful. I know in Georgia during our criminal justice reform efforts, the importance of bipartisan cooperation and leadership is really critical to building momentum, I think, and keeping that momentum in building trust with legislators. I know that for us from 2012 to 2018, with really so many highly divisive wedge issues dominating the legislative landscape, we really found a commonality of interest in Georgia's criminal justice, bipartisan, sort of nonpartisan collaborative effort. That collaborative effort gave comfort, I think, to the legislators who were relying on that process. And what Georgia did, I think, was important. I think what goes often unsaid is how we did it, and how we did it was really the driver and that was this sort of bipartisan collaborative approach built upon existing data and ensuring that that existing data drove critical decision-making for policy-makers in our state. So Georgia, not unlike Connecticut, found value in the existing data, really informing policy-makers. Director Skinner, can you share your thoughts on this particular question?

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Sure. Thank you, Justice Boggs. Agency leadership is going to be absolutely critical for any of this to happen. Agencies must be bought in to make this work effectively, but once they are, the advantages are going to be obvious. We can compare ourselves to our counterparts in other states, we can look at how other areas of our own system are functioning and how that's impacting us, and we can provide other state leaders with a high-level picture of what's going on across the system in a consistent and meaningful way, not in a haphazard way where we used to do, and still do to a certain extent. Again, our

agencies have a ton of data, but it's bringing clarity and direction to that that's important and exciting here.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

If Justice Counts points us all in the same direction, and that is achievable and a meaningful in a short amount of time, that's a big leap for the field. It shows policy-makers what they want to see. It helps us plot a path forward together in terms of our collection of data together, also for using same metrics as other departments, especially other departments of corrections. We can see what's happening in real time across the country. That would be a huge tool for us because I cannot tell you how many times I get asked by legislators, "How do we become compare to other states? How do we compare in recidivism? How do we compare in revocations?" And I say that's a difficult question, in a sense, because not everyone measures things the same way. It's not apples to apples. It's a lot of apples to oranges. Justice Counts gives us this opportunity for apples to apples.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Yeah, it's a good way to put it. A big leap forward indeed, comparing apples to apples. The misinformation that drives so much policy is so problematic. This entire approach is so new and refreshing. Thank you, Director, for that response. Captain Eby, we'd love to hear from you.

Captain Lee Eby:

Thank you. Clarity and focus on what to measure first. This problem is so vast it'd be hard to know where to start. Having Justice Counts clarify what metrics we should all focus on, reporting better first means we'll all benefit for having more comparable information that was already mentioned. Having open source tools to bring the data together across agencies and to life with visualizations instead of scattered across siloed reports or agencies is definitely going to help us. These tools will be a game changer. Having a common way we can all report data will make it easier to analyze from state to state, from local jurisdiction, to neighbor jurisdictions. We are really talking about looking at, what are the best practices nationally and locally, and trying to implement those through that comparatory data.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Yeah, well, that's a great point and a good segue into the next question is looking at best practices and who's leading the charge, right? So who is leading the charge when it comes to good data practices? I want to ask a question about that. Are you aware of any places that are already doing great work in using data to inform policy-making within the criminal justice space? And if anything, what can we learn from them? I'll start with you, Representative Walker. Representative Walker, you're muted.

Representative Toni Walker:

Sorry, sorry. There was a fire engine going by. Connecticut is a leader in this area, but there's room for improvement every time as well. Lawmakers get a monthly report system-wide with indicators to help us decide how we're going to make changes in the upcoming sessions each time, especially with the budget. We have one agency specifically assigned to collect all data from across all the systems so that we all are reading the information exactly the same, and we bring it together. We are a relatively small state with a unified corrections system, but even here, because my colleagues have identified, the correctional systems tend to have very little information and data, and that is a serious challenge that we have here in Connecticut. We are trying to improve their method of gathering information so that as we do... We're starting to do this right now in Connecticut because we're beginning the budget process

to do that. And we do the data collection and presentation to the legislators at the very beginning so that we can start to look at that. So I think it's important that we all look at, how do we incorporate it into our process? So thank you, sir.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Yeah, that's a good example. The unified system is of course an advantage to folks in Connecticut. Let's turn to Dr. Skinner... Director Skinner, excuse me. Who's leading the charge when it comes to these good data collection practices?

Dr. Beth Skinner:

I can tell you... So there's a number of agencies in Iowa that use dashboards. Here in corrections, Department of Corrections, we use multiple dashboards for programming, for discipline, for reentry, for grievances, for housing, employment and things like that. We use our dashboard and our staff use our dashboard from the case manager level all the way up to the director. The Iowa Department of Human Services here in Iowa has some court-focused dashboards that are very helpful as well. But basically, Iowa Department of Corrections with the Department of Public Safety also make a lot of data available to the public, which comes in especially handy around this time of year, the legislative session. We certainly made some improvements. Do we have some work to do? Absolutely. But if we can increase the buy-in amongst stakeholders, especially folks at the local level, policy-makers, and use the Justice Count infrastructure, that would be a huge step in the right direction for us and would improve upon what we're already doing with data.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Thank you, Director Skinner. I think your point about building collaboration and building buy-in among stakeholders is really a critical, critical point. The criminal justice system is a very large system with multiple stakeholders, so if we want to use data to understand it, everyone has to be on board with that. And as you all know, we've had discussions as a steering committee about how to build that buy-in, how to make metrics achievable and meaningful, even for smaller agencies, and so on. State folks, local folks, county folks, we all have to work together to improve the collaborative nature and usefulness of this data. So I think that's a great segue into our county stakeholder here. Captain Eby, if you can respond...

Captain Lee Eby:

Thank you, Your Honor. Oregon has come long way in terms of data. With the direction of the legislature, especially with the involvement and coordination of... Well, we have our Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. We use statewide dashboards as key indicators for things like community supervision that helps drive where our programs go and the legislature's budgetary allocations. There's also a system of county criminal justice coordinating committees at the local level within each county that can be used with data to help administer policies and focus in those smaller communities, which may have different issues or problems than the larger.

Captain Lee Eby:

However, with that being said, we still as a state, county jails, everybody has their own jail management system. Oftentimes, they don't communicate with each other. It can be very labor intensive to get that information or data to one other facility, even if they're neighbors. So really Justice Counts' focus on getting agencies across the system to report publicly in a timely way would really open the door for us.

As a jail commander, my first thing every day is I'm looking at data, I'm looking at numbers, I'm looking at reports, and to see what other jails are doing in Oregon and elsewhere, whether it be here or a neighboring state, would be just amazing. It also allowed me to see what my law enforcement agencies, courts, parole and probation, other parts of the system are doing and how my decisions might impact their operations. It allows policy-makers to see the whole system, whether that's county commissioners here at Clackamas County or our representatives in the legislature, or even the governor and her team, it's all there for them to see what's happening-

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Captain Lee Eby:

... or even the governor and her team. It's all there for them to see what's happening system wide and figure out how we can use our resources better for the sole purpose of having better outcomes in the criminal justice system.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

I think you hit the nail on the head. I mean, being able to see all of it system wide is so critical, I think, particularly as the counties and cities and state government and all of these agencies are so siloed. So really appreciate your response and thank you for highlighting those issues from a county perspective. Captain Eby, I want to turn back to you. So what really excites you most about the Justice Counts approach? What is it going to take to make progress on what we consider to be very ambitious goals of this initiative?

Captain Lee Eby:

Thank you. There's so many things about Justice Count that gets me excited. You call it data geek. Like I said, every day I get up, I come to work and I'm looking at numbers. And what excites me about this project, I think, the most is the collaborative nature of it. We've not had, in criminal justice, this level of involvement from so many partners across the system and creating data that is readily and easily accessible by everybody so we could share, again, best practices. Is the first time we are measuring the same data in apple to apple. As some of the other panelists have mentioned is that it really is important that we have that fidelity with the data. And having something like this on such a large scale is just going to be incredible. And I think for it to be successful is what we've seen, which is people are willing to get down in the trenches, work together, come up with solutions. And I think in the end we're going to have a better product in our justice system.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Well, I think that's so important. And on behalf of all folks that have engaged in criminal justice reform led by data, we all are data geeks, right? I mean, we value the importance of these data in informing and properly forming our decision making. So thank you. That certainly makes sense. And I appreciate your insight there. Next let's turn to the importance of not just any data, but timely data. So I want to ask this question, does any agency or office in your state get timely data from across the criminal justice spectrum? And if not, how can Justice Counts help fill that role? Director Skinner, let's start with you.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Sure. Thank you, Justice Boggs. I don't think we're at a point right now where I feel that it's in a timely manner, because people are extracting from different databases on things like that. There's no

connections there. People might be interpreting the data differently or extracting it differently. But what I want to comment about is that... And I believe Justice Counts can get us there which is the exciting part of all this. But we are really moving into an era where policy makers and advisors are incredibly focused on data driven solutions. To develop large scale solutions, we have to have inter-agency data systems that need to cross collaborate like I mentioned earlier.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

We need the ability to see whether an issue is in one state or is either central to a particular state or indicative of a larger issue seen by multiple states or even nationally. So having a larger centralized reporting network could also help with public safety, particularly instances where federal crime cross state borders or move across state lines. And then finally, I just want to mention is that from a data perspective, of course, I will call myself a data geek as well, and a public safety perspective, enhancing criminal justice data across multiple systems could seriously impact the way we do business and it could lead us to large scale positive outcomes. But we got to put in the work is what we have to do.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Indeed. So captain Eby, I'll turn back to you. How can Justice Counts help states get timely data from across criminal justice spectrums and fill that role?

Captain Lee Eby:

I think it really does come down, as mentioned by Director Skinners, is that ability to get that information in a one stop, easy access for all of our agencies. Whether it's a huge large agency or if it's a small one in part of the country, we have to make it available to everybody. And what I'm seeing with Justice Counts is exactly that. Is we are trying to design a system that is there to help everybody. Because the only way we can be successful is if we're all in there as a team. And so right now, what we're seeing as we're moving forward is we're finding the definitions. We are looking at apples to apples, we are... All those things are coming together for the sole purpose of making sure everybody can participate. And at the end of the day, we are going to have a better system and a safer system, which is better outcomes for those involved in justice and the public.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

It is one system and we forget that when we're engaged in only one piece of it, but it is one system. So I appreciate that insight. And as we move to the last question, any conversation about criminal justice data and how it drives public policy, I think, is really incomplete without a discussion of public safety. So my last question is clearly one of the key Justice Counts themes is the idea that good criminal justice data is tied to good public safety outcomes and vice versa. So I'd like to turn to you, Representative Walker. How do you see Justice Counts playing a role in public safety and what other outcomes do you anticipate?

Representative Toni Walker:

So I think the most important thing is that we understand that public safety is meant for all people. It's not just meant for people that are caught up within the system. When we look at the data, and we look at sharing the data and actually making sure that it's good, achievable and understanding materials that we have, we see changes in multiple ways. In Connecticut, we have looked at the fact that the majority of kids in our criminal justice system are minority. What we had to do is find out why are we having more minority kids in the criminal justice system. And we had to go back and go through the data to

look at suspensions and expulsions. We then found out how that connected into the schools. The schools were actually leading the kids into this criminal justice system.

Representative Toni Walker:

And the only way we did that was by looking at the data and comparing where the kids are coming from and how they're getting there. Those are the things that help us to look at public safety for all. Kids that end up in a system that really should not be receiving them is definitely a way of sharing and saving their lives. And what it also does is helps us to look at what programs we have out there for them to see if they work, because there are of programs that are out there that we have not evaluated as far as getting kids into services and things that are coming the criminal justice system or adults. And those things are part of the data spectrum that I think we need to look at. So Justice Counts is going provide us with all of those opportunities to talk about the services, to talk about how do people get into the system and look at it in a way that is fair for all. And I call that public safety without any effort.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

I think you've explained it perfectly. The conversation about what's driving those children into the criminal justice system cannot really be elaborated on without these data. And these data are going to also help inform decisions about what programs can best be implemented to improve public safety outcomes. And so the citizens of Connecticut are going to get a better ROI on their public safety taxpayer dollars if they have better data informing those decisions. So thank you. Personally, I would say relative to the role that Justice Counts plays in public safety, that this initiative really is showing that we as criminal justice professionals, all of us, and stakeholders, that we value data as a tool for better understanding and improving public safety. It can be hard to measure and it can be measured in different ways, but we all have a role to play and we have to use data to unpack that role.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

My hope is that this initiative not only provides a lot of policy makers and others with data they've long lacked, but at a higher level, it shows our commitment and our adaptability and ability to adapt to using new approaches to make things better. Too much, in my opinion, is at stake for too many people for us to fall back on the way we've always done things. So I hope this is a great step forward in that. And I thank of you for your really thoughtful, insightful responses to these questions and for the roles that you play in your respective communities and states. Thank you for your commitment to this project and this initiative. We've saved about 15 minutes to take questions from those of you tuning in across the country. As a reminder, there are two ways to submit a question to our panelists; on social media using the hashtag Justice Counts or in Vimeo comment box at the bottom of your screen.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

So if you submit those questions, we'll have our staff submit those to us and then we will in turn, turn those questions over to members of our panel. So it looks like we've got a couple of questions. Let's hit at least three questions in the 10 minutes or so that we have, and then we'll shift to other audience questions we have with about four or five lined up. The first question, are there justified fears in making more data public? How do we help agencies become more comfortable with making what may be really hard to defend data available to the public? And I would address that to Director Skinner.

Dr. Beth Skinner:

Thank you, Justice Boggs. I think this is something that I think is very common. I think people get concerned about, is too much? Does it put it on a platform to be scrutinized? From my perspective, it's transparency. We like to put our data out in the open, just like public safety does so we can answer people's questions. So our regular website, we have everything from who's in our prisons and community based corrections and race, age, sex, you name it. We report a recidivism rate, things like that. But I think in this day and age, I think it's really important that we have data readily available for the public to see. I think it increases trust amongst the public, amongst our policy makers. And then people also understand why we make the decisions we make. I think having that data available, people can see what we're working with and why we have to make the decisions that we do.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

I think that's right. And government should never be fearful of being transparent. And it does increase public's trust when they see these data. I think it's in... I've encountered this in Georgia, all of these data, some are good, some are bad, some reflect poorly on leadership, some don't. The key is to include the context, right? And to help fully inform the public about what these data actually mean. And so what gives you hope and why is now the right time to tackle, I think, is the next question I would ask. And so what gives you hope and why is now the right time to tackle this issue? What does success look like for Justice Counts and the people that use it? So that's the next question and I would direct that to Representative Walker.

Representative Toni Walker:

Thank you, Justice Boggs. I think the most important thing is that we learn and agencies and administrations learn that change is something that is inevitable. We are all making major changes in our lives and directions and it's for a good thing. Yes, maybe it's going to point out some of the issues that may be our weakness. Maybe we made decisions, as Dr. Skinner said, we made decisions that were probably not filled with data to make those decisions that are going to be best for society, but that's okay. We're ready to do this and we're ready to do it in a way that Justice Counts leads us in that direction. And we embrace it. And change is difficult for everybody, no matter what. So we've just got to embrace change with a smile and say, this is going to help make our world that much better. So I think, yes, we're going to have problems, but it's something that I think all of us will embrace and accept, and also feel that it's going in the right direction.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Well, your answer, Representative Walker, is filled with hope. And so I appreciate that response. Another question we've gotten is, for so long without good data, criminal justice policy making has been in response to stories and anecdotes that capture the public's attention. But once better data is available, how should policy makers make data informed decisions while still learning from the experiences of those with experiences in the justice system? So Captain Eby, I would refer to you for that question. So how do we respond to the reactionary politics that we've seen that's not grounded in data with the Justice Counts initiative?

Captain Lee Eby:

Thank you. And I think what it takes is a balance, because we cannot take the human aspect out of our job. It's not all about numbers, ones and twos. This is all about trying to come out with a better outcome. And some of that is understanding the data. It means you have to know what the people are experiencing. And so if we have a balance between the two where we can make informed decisions

based on that data for the sole purpose of, again, having those better outcomes. Is what we did successful? Are we perfect? No.

Captain Lee Eby:

Are we going to make decisions that may not turn out to be the best? Yes. But if we can look back at and say, what's the better way to look at it, I think that's what we got to do. And I think that's how you make a balance of it. And again, if it's a joint, it's a team, it's both sides, bipartisan, everybody involved, we're not pointing fingers here, we're trying to make a better system, you will get that balance. And I think in the end of the day, we're going to have better outcomes. Our system will be much better.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

Well, thank you. That's very thoughtful. And I want to thank all of you, Captain Eby. Representative Walker, Director Skinner, for your willingness to participate today. You are incredible presenters and panelists. Your really insightful comments, I think, have really helped inform us about the importance of this initiative. And so I want to thank you all for participating. And thank you to all of those who tuned in. As a final closing remarks, I would simply say, if you could, please take a few minutes to tell us what you thought about the event. There's going to be a survey link that is available now on social media and in the Vimeo chat.

Presiding Justice Michael P. Boggs:

This will also be delivered to you by email if you registered for this event. We value your feedback. It will help us improve our events going forward. Also, if you preregistered for today's event, we will send an email with the recording of today's discussion. If you did not preregister you can still access this recording on the Justice Counts website. And then finally, please join the Justice Counts email list to learn about future events and resources. You can sign up at the link on your screen. And with that, thank you all for joining us today. It has been a pleasure being with all of you. Have a safe and pleasant week.

Representative Toni Walker:

Thank you.

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