

Timeline of The Bartlett Commission, 1961-1971

- January 4, 1961 In his Annual Message Governor Rockefeller calls for a revision of the Penal Law and Code of Criminal Procedure, stating: "The Penal Law and the Code contain archaic provisions which should be modernized...and that this be undertaken by a Commission including in its membership the Chairman of the Judicial Conference, law enforcement officials and members of the bar."¹
- April 6, 1961 Governor Rockefeller signs into law the bill creating the *State of New York Temporary Commission on Revision of the Penal Law and Criminal Code*, which appropriates \$150,000 for its operation.
- June 20, 1961 On the recommendation of Joseph F. Carlino, Speaker of the Assembly, Governor Rockefeller designates Richard J. Bartlett as Chairman of the Commission. Also appointed on this day are: Timothy N. Pfeiffer as Vice-Chairman, and Howard A. Jones, William B. Mahoney, Justice Philip Halpern, Professor Herbert Wechsler, John J. Conway Jr., Assemblyman William Kapelman, and Nicholas Atlas as members.
- August 2, 1961 Richard D. Denzer is appointed as Counsel to the Commission.
- November 1, 1961 Peter J. McQuillan joins the Commission as Assistant Counsel.
- February 1, 1962 The First Interim Report of the Commission is published.
- February 1, 1963 The Second Interim Report of the Commission is published.
- March 16, 1964 The Commission submits a draft Penal Law to the State Senate and Assembly "for Purpose of Study."
- March 16, 1965 "An Act Providing for the punishment of offenses, constituting chapter forty of the consolidated laws" is submitted to the State Legislature.
- June 4, 1965 The Assembly, by a vote of 106 to 24, passes the Commission's bill, followed by Senate passage on June 9th, transmitting it to the Governor for his signature.
- July 20, 1965 Governor Rockefeller signs the new Penal Law into law, the first revision of the statute in over 80 years, and declares that, "a new scheme of sentencing is provided affording ample scope for both the rehabilitation of offenders and the protection of the public."²
- September 1, 1967 The revised Penal Law takes effect.
- September, 1968 The Commission submits a proposed version of the new Criminal Procedure Law to the State Legislature for study.

¹ "Text of Governor's Annual Message to the Legislature as 1961 Session Opens," *The New York Times*, January 5, 1961, 21.

² Griset, Pamela L., *Determinate Sentencing: The Promise and the Reality of Retributive Justice* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 19.

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- February 26, 1969 A further revised Criminal Procedure Law is transmitted to the State Legislature.
- March 25, 1969 The State Legislature postpones action on the Criminal Procedure Law for one year. Republican majority leaders cite lack of time to review the 452-page bill as the reason for the delay.
- January 7, 1970 Governor Rockefeller praises the work of the Commission, stating in his annual message to the Legislature that the Commission, "has recommended a new criminal procedure law embodying significant improvements in our system of criminal justice."³
- April 13, 1970 The State Assembly gives approval to the bill creating a new Criminal Procedure Law by a vote of 128 to 17. Passage in the Senate followed on April 20th.
- May 20, 1970 Governor Rockefeller signs the Criminal Procedure Law into law and commends the Commission's work, "especially its Chairman Richard J. Bartlett."
- September 1, 1971 The new Code of Criminal Procedure comes into effect. Judge Peter J. McQuillan, former Counsel to the Commission, comments, "The big picture in all our minds is to achieve justice, provide fair trials and speedy dispositions and see that defendants are sentenced appropriately...I hope it's balanced and fair. That was what was sought."⁴

³ "Excerpts From Governor Rockefeller's Address at Opening of the Legislature," *The New York Times*, January 8, 1970, 31.

⁴ "New Criminal Process Law in Effect," *The New York Times*, September 5, 1971, 34.