



## **U.S. Sentencing Commission**

**One Columbus Circle, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-8002**

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release  
May 18, 2010**

**Contact:** Michael Courlander  
Public Affairs Officer  
(202) 502-4597

### **UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARING ON MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCING**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— On May 27, 2010, the United States Sentencing Commission will hold a public hearing on statutory mandatory minimum penalties in the federal sentencing system in Washington, D.C. The Commission is holding this hearing to gather information for its forthcoming, comprehensive report to Congress about federal statutory mandatory minimum penalties and their effects in the federal sentencing system. The full-day event will include testimony from federal sentencing experts and practitioners, including representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice, the defense bar, law enforcement, community interest groups, and members of academia.

In October 2009, Congress directed the Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of these penalties as part of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act (Sec. 4713 of Pub. L. No. 111—84). Commission chair, Chief Judge William K. Sessions III (District of Vermont), said, “Congress recognizes the important role of the Commission in the setting of sentencing policy, and directed the Commission to conduct a thorough, wide-ranging study and compile a report on statutory mandatory minimum penalties and their broader role in the criminal justice system. The resulting report to Congress will be the most up-to-date and definitive work on this very important topic.” The report is due to Congress no later than October 28, 2010.

Congress provided a detailed list of topics it expects the Commission to cover in its report, including –

- \* assessing the effects of mandatory minimum sentencing on the goal of eliminating unwarranted sentencing disparity, the other goals of sentencing, and the federal prison population;
- \* assessing the compatibility of mandatory minimum sentencing laws and the current federal guidelines system;
- \* describing the interaction between mandatory minimum sentencing and plea agreements; and

- \* discussing means other than mandatory minimums by which Congress can act in regard to sentencing policy.

The Commission expects that these topics, as well as other issues associated with federal statutory mandatory minimum penalties and the federal sentencing system, will be addressed during the hearing.

The public and the media are invited to attend the hearing, which will be held May 27, 2010, at the Mechem Conference Center, Ground Floor, South Lobby of the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, located at One Columbus Circle, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. The hearing will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 5:30 p.m. The agenda (including a list of witnesses) for the hearing is available on the Commission's web site at: [www.ussc.gov](http://www.ussc.gov).

The United States Sentencing Commission, an independent agency in the judicial branch of the federal government, was organized in 1985 to develop a national sentencing policy for the federal courts. The resulting sentencing guidelines structure the courts' sentencing discretion to help ensure that similar offenders who commit similar offenses receive similar sentences.

###