

July 26, 2017

United States Sentencing Commission
One Columbus Circle, NE
Suite 2-500
South Lobby
Washington, DC 20002-8002

Attention: Public Affairs – Priorities Comment

I've never done this before, but am taking this opportunity to let my voice be heard. I'm writing you today to ask the United States Sentencing Commission to reform the career offender guideline to promote proportionality and reduce sentencing disparities so that the sentences aren't so absurd. Defendants sentenced as a career offender suffer unreasonable and disproportionately lengthy sentences. The emotional and financial burden suffered by their families is crushing, which oftentimes creates more hardship where they are forced to seek financial support from government programs for housing, medical, food and child care to survive. Children grow up without a parent, causing a host of economic, educational, and social challenges. This snowball effect creates a cyclical financial impact on the government that could otherwise be used to help community and economic developments to help prevent crime. Although I don't know anyone who has been sentenced under the career offender guideline, I feel the over-sentences these people receive are unnecessarily harsh and disproportional to sentences of more severe crimes and are inconsistently delivered. Is it realistic to say a murderer can be rehabilitated and released, but not someone with a lesser crime?

Career offender sentences are monumentally worse than the offense warrants. What does our community possibly gain when we lock up people for such absurd prison terms? Does the compounding of a sentence really make us safer? Should tax payers continue to carry the weight to keep them incarcerated and pay higher medical care as they grow older? Has mass incarceration become a big business industry where there is no motivation to let anyone out of prison? Isn't the goal of our correctional institutions to rehabilitate our people so that they can assimilate back into society by becoming productive, sustainable citizens? We can't keep growing the prisons and exceeding other nations in our incarceration rates. Punishments need to be reasonable, not a lifetime without hope.

We've all heard success stories of people who've been given a chance to show they can turn their lives around and earn the respect of society. Rather than stacking and compounding more time on a defendant's sentence, we should look for ways where while incarcerated, they can complete milestones that would qualify them for reclassification. I.E. vocational and educational training, substance/mental health treatment successfully completed, mentorship and examples of model behavior, work therapy jobs, life-skills and financial education completed. A major element of the correctional mission is to provide resources and opportunities for inmates to exchange criminal conduct for a legitimate life through successful relations with others.

Because of all this and more, I am requesting the United States Sentencing Commission review the injustice of over-sentencing and over-criminalization in our country, which is unnecessarily harsh and contributes to prison overcrowding while ballooning the prison budget. I'm asking you to rectify this injustice by reforming the career offender guideline to have more realistic sentencing.

With respect, Joseph [REDACTED] Evans

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With respect, Joseph [REDACTED] Evans

Dear Sir's

My name is Michael [redacted] Billick. I am currently serving a 17 year sentence for possession with intent to distribute 5 grams or more, less than 50 grams of methamphetamine. I was arrested with 13 grams.

Regardless, I did have in my possession an illegale drug. I plead guilty in U.S. Fed. Ct. I was wrong.

The problem with my sentence, is I was scored as an Career Offender. I do have 2 prior drug feloneis. One for possession with intent, sale of 3 grams. One with possions of percurser. Both state of Iowa charges. I was and always will be a drug addict. Meth is a very hard drug to escape from. That should be pretty evident with all the people locked up, both in state and Fed. prisons.

When I was sentenced, I was 55 years old. I have both a wife and a young son, who was [redacted] years old at the time. He is now [redacted]. I went from an [redacted] [redacted] making \$80,000⁰⁰ a year job, to making 12¢ an hr. My wife and son are getting by on all state and Fed. Wellfare. HUD, ELECT. + HEATING Ass., food stamps and any other programs they are eligible for.

I wish you to know, I believe in law & order. However this get tuff on drug war is a little out of hand. I am a drug addict, I don't need locked up for most of my life, I need a comprehensive drug treatment. I am ordered to R.D.A.P. which I will be taking 13 years later into my

sentence. Did I say I am a small time /small amount of drug seller. This law that I was sentenced under .841 A. as with .851 turned my charge from a state crime, into a Federal offense. Which turned a 5 year min/mand. into a 10 year to life sentence. Is this what the law makers intended on, or were these laws meant for large scale drug conspiracys? This is to me like the Calif. 3 strikes law, although it fit some people, the life sentence for the man with prior felonies, stole a pizza, got a life sentence. These extream sentences are putting more and more drug offenders away for a good part of thier lives. As I said I believe in law and order. There is a need, wouldn't it be money better spent on better treatment?

Give an repeat drug addict a year drug treatment. These two week to a month are not working for you, or the addict. who more then likely at least $\frac{1}{2}$ could be productive citizens with proper comprencive treatment.

Law is Law, and must be obeyed. But this is wrong. Shouldn't fed. prisoner's be givin the oppertunity to recieve drug treatment, learn education, work skills to make an decent living. Let them work on programs to earn a parole, as most states have. These tuff stances that were made for hard line drug cartels, they are not here. What I see is low level addicts turning on other addicts to get sentence

reductions. The outcome of this, is what we have now, low levels drug offenders with extream amounts of time, which in turn has overcrowded an already ageing prison population. Just, look at the last 50 years.

I am not a real smart man, but even I can see something is very wrong. There are so many drug inmates, there is not both the staff and resources to give them any kind of rehabilitation.

Is it not a good time to take the one size fits all sentence away. Put it back to where it would most work.

Drug addiction is a terrible disease. You cannot stop the flo, when the consumer can't stop. As I said, there are very few top level drug icon's that I have met or heard of in the prisons I have been to.

Please treat us, don't lock us up and our families for ever, or a good portion of our lives. My son will be 18 when I get out, for passing 13 grams of Meth.

c.c. Sen. Chuck Grassly Thank you
U.S. sent. Comm.
U.S. ATT. Gen.

Sincerely
Michael Billick

reductions. The outcome of this is what
we have now, but levels are elsewhere with
external amounts of time which in turn
has exacerbated an already existing problem
population. Just look at the last 20 years.
I am not a real smart man, but even I can
see something is very wrong. There is so much
being immated, this is not both the state
and resources to give them any kind of
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Is it not a good time to take the
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Drug addiction is a terrible disease. You
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drug icons that I have not heard of in
the prison I have been to.
Please treat us, don't lock us up and
our families let out, or a good portion
of our lives. And son will be 18 when
I get out, for passing 13 years of my life.

Thank you
US Sent Comm
US Am Gov

Sincerely,
Michael Balluff

pubaffairs@ussc.gov, Good morning Sentencing Commissioner my name is Dennis Best & right now I`m a man in the Federal Prison system that truly needs 2 be fixed in some ways and I wanted to reach out so that when u try to make changes in the 2018 cycle maybe hearing from a inmate himself with a story u will do somethings that truly is needed...Sir I have been here doing this time for the past 17yrs plus for a drug case that I only got charged for 21.8 grams of crack cocaine and at trial I was sentenced to 30 yrs in prison based on my prior cases which they claimed made my a career offender...In my past I been to prison one time and I took one plea bargain in which I had to plead guilty to three charges one being a simple drug case, one being dealing in a sawed-off shotgun, and one being a battery with a deadly weapon...I was sentenced on the same day by the same judge & the sentence was ran together and I was sentenced to one sentence..The Federal judge broke it up and made it three cases and went against my PSI and sentenced me to 30 yrs due to him saying I was a career offender..The problem with this is there was never a separate arrest for the battery with a deadly weapon case I was charged with that while being locked up fo [REDACTED] other case...More important is that the probation officer David [REDACTED] contacted ur office for advice on if I was or wasn`t a career offender and was provided with a memorandum that stated they probation was right I did not meet what was needed to be a career offender...My reason for giving u this story is to maybe get you to understand how important it is to fix the career offender provisions and the way they go about ruling inmates as a career offender...

1)You made a ruling in what is called the 709 amendment where u stated if the person is sentenced on the same day by the same judge it count for one conviction which is what my case was but what you didn`t do was make it retroactive so that those inmates like myself thats doing time for the confusion that the judges said the guidelines was b4 you made the ruling in 709...So today yall realize that it was a big misunderstanding in the guidelines but yet those inmates like myself was not able to get resentenced the right way only cause the ruling wasn`t made retroactive...

2)The 18to1 guidelines a person that was sentenced as a career offender was unable to get the 18 to 1 cause the courts say that based on being a career offender the 18 to 1 won`t change ur sentence but yet for those who get sentenced today they`ll get the 18 to 1 then get careered but they won`t have 30 yrs but yet will have the same case as I do when I got sentenced at 100 to 1....

3)Also lately you changed in the career offender provisions that sawed-off shotgun wasn`t a crime of violence which at the time of my sentence it wasn`t in the provisions either but when you changed it again no retroactive so there was no way for a inmate like myself to be able to get some action on the new law...

My point here is that alot has been ruled wrong & fixed for the best but yet those like myself still suffer from the old laws & today I ask u to look into fixing that for those doing time..Some have been here for 20 or 30 yrs for crimes that today due to law changes a person will only get 5 or 10 years for the same crime that a p [REDACTED] ears to life for years ago...Sir my name is Dennis Best [REDACTED] and I would like for you to take some time pull my case [REDACTED] what it is I`m trying to explain to you so that maybe then you will understand the help people like myself need when you make changes to better the guidelines...Thank you & have a good day

July 29, 2017

Nancy Yard
[REDACTED]

United States Sentencing Commission
One Columbus Circle, N.E. Suite 2-500
Washington, D.C. 20002-8002

Attn: Public Comment on Sentencing Guidelines

Dear Honorable Judge Pryor,

I am writing to provide public comment on Sentencing Guidelines as they apply to Child Pornography Sentencing. I have firsthand experience with how the guidelines are used and how they affect the accused and their families.

My son who is a victim of molestation and developed an internet addiction which included downloading and distributing child pornography is currently serving a 100 month sentence. He has not viewed cp in over seven years and was very honest in explaining his addiction and his desire to break it. He immediately enrolled in counseling and developed a healthy lifestyle as soon as his silence on the abuse was broken.

The judge however, felt compelled to sentence him according to the guidelines even though he had at that time broken his addiction and had demonstrated that with continued counseling he was making excellent strides. He was gainfully employed in his field as a mechanical engineer and leading outdoor trips for young adults.

The sentence took him from our home and has treated him like a pedophile which he is not. He is a victim. The judge in sentencing [REDACTED] stated that the Federal Government made it clear that this is what they wanted and did not take into account all that he had been through and all he had done since his arrest.

This has been a very difficult road for our family and with three years to go remains so. To take a young man that has been abused and has finally broken his silence away from the support of friends and family is devastating.

The guidelines should take into account the offender's ability to change their behavior and what led them to this behavior in the first place. They should consider counseling and home support as a first consideration for those like [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is listed as a violent offender when he never touched a child or offended a child. He is the victim. He was offended. None of this is taken into account with the current guidelines.

By labeling him a violent offender and placing him in jail for 100 months followed by ten years on probation and possibly life on the sex offender registry, these laws in effect are allowing the abuse he received as a child to destroy his entire life.

I would be more than willing to provide testimony demonstrating how these laws are destroying families. When [REDACTED] spoke of his addiction following his arrest, I asked the counselor if he needed to be placed in a residential treatment facility. The counselor made it clear that this was not necessary. That as he understood his abuse, how it led to his addiction and developed other ways to deal with the resulting stress and anxiety he would be fine.

Why is someone that is fine with counseling spending 100 months in prison? I thought prison was to protect the public from those that remained a danger. [REDACTED] was not a danger to children. He suffered post-traumatic stress syndrome and was if anything a danger to himself.

Please consider changing the guidelines to allow for probation as opposed to prison. Please change the guidelines so that first time offenders who download and distribute cp due to the ease of computer sharing are not listed as violent offenders. Please change the guidelines so that those that show a desire and the ability to change their behavior and live a clean lawful life do not go on a public registry.

Please change these guidelines for families like ours that truly want to help their son. Put yourself in the place of a mother who finds that her son has been molested and then finds out that due to the guidelines she cannot help him. She can just wait and watch him go to jail.

I can be reached at [REDACTED] If you would like to learn more about how these guidelines destroy families.

Thank you for listening,

Nancy Yard