



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
219 SOUTH DEARBORN STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60604-1801

CHAMBERS OF  
MARY M. ROWLAND  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

(312) 435-5358

October 13, 2022

Honorable Carlton W. Reeves  
Chair  
United States Sentencing Commission  
One Columbus Circle, NE, Suite 2500  
South Lobby, Washington, DC 20002-8002  
Attention: Public Affairs – Priorities Comment

Sent via electronic mail: [pubaffairs@ussc.gov](mailto:pubaffairs@ussc.gov)

**Re: Alternative to Incarceration Programs**

Dear Honorable Judge Carlton W. Reeves and Distinguished Commission Members:

We are aware you have several priorities on your agenda. We write to express our strong support for the Commission's interest in studying and strengthening court-sponsored diversion and alternatives-to-incarceration programs.

We are the two judicial officers who launched the Northern District of Illinois's Sentencing Options that Achieve Results (SOAR) Program in 2016. Like many court-sponsored programs, it is an intensive supervision program jointly staffed by federal judges, U.S. Pretrial Services Officers, Federal Defenders, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys. SOAR provides an alternative to incarceration for selected non-violent offenders through a creative blend of treatment, sanctions, and incentives to effectively address adverse behavior.

The SOAR Program began in 2016 under the leadership of then Chief Judge Rubén Castillo, himself a member of the Sentencing Commission from 1999 to 2010. Thirty-one (31) individuals have successfully graduated from SOAR—with another graduation scheduled for February 2023. Our participants faced serious sentences prior to entering SOAR, with an average Guidelines range midpoint of thirty-nine (39) months. At the three-year mark following graduation, we searched criminal records and verified that none of our graduates have been arrested for new offenses.

Based on this success, we believe SOAR is not only a successful individual diversion program, but also a successful crime prevention program.

We are committed to expanding SOAR in the future and believe that other districts could benefit from a similar program. Any effort to truly expand such programs will require examining budgeting priorities. We hope the Commission will act on its announced tentative policy priority to undertake a multiyear study of court-sponsored ATI programs. We are willing to provide any information or assistance in your efforts.

Sincerely,



Amy J. St. Eve  
Circuit Judge  
Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals



Mary M. Rowland  
District Judge  
District Court, Northern District of Illinois

cc: Hon. Rubén Castillo (Ret.)  
Hon. Jorge Alonso  
Hon. Beth Jantz  
Chief Amanda Garcia,  
U.S. Pretrial Services  
Northern District of Illinois