

The United States Sentencing Commission is an **independent bipartisan** agency in the **judicial branch** of government



MISSION



Establish sound and equitable sentencing policies and practices for the federal courts;

Advise and assist Congress and the executive branch in the development of effective and efficient crime policy;

Collect, analyze, research, and distribute a broad array of information on federal crime.

FEATURED RESOURCES



INTERACTIVE DATA ANALYZER

The Interactive Data Analyzer (IDA) allows users to customize the tables and figures presented in the printed Sourcebook. The data can be tailored to any jurisdiction or group of jurisdictions, and year or multiple years. All analyses can be saved in PDF or Excel format.

ida.ussc.gov

JUDICIARY SENTENCING INFORMATION

The Judiciary Sentencing Information (JSIN) platform is an online sentencing data resource specifically developed with the needs of judges in mind. The platform provides quick and easy online access to sentencing data for similarly situated defendants.

jsin.ussc.gov

GUIDELINES TRAINING

Our website features eLearning programs and training videos focusing on sentencing issues, hot topics, and recent Commission activities. The Office of General Counsel's legal primers on guideline issues as well as relevant case law are also available online.

www.ussc.gov/education

For regular updates,
visit www.ussc.gov
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United States Sentencing Commission



OVERVIEW

of the
United States Sentencing Commission

COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

COMMISSIONERS

The Commission consists of seven voting members who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. At least three of the commissioners shall be federal judges and no more than four may belong to the same political party. In addition, the Attorney General (or his or her designee) is an ex-officio member of the Commission as is the chair of the U.S. Parole Commission.

STAFF

The Commission is a small federal agency of approximately 100 employees. Staff includes attorneys, researchers, data technicians, administrative personnel, and training, public information, and congressional specialists.

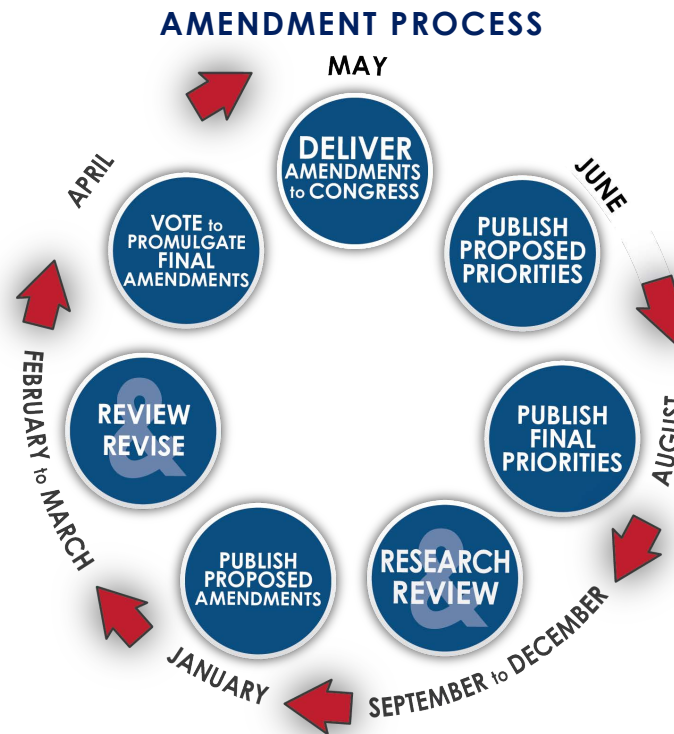
ADVISORY GROUPS

The Commission is advised by four standing advisory groups representing the views of practitioners, probation officers, victims, and tribal lands.

OUR WORK

The Commission's work is ongoing. Each year, the agency collects a vast amount of federal sentencing data.

The Commission also reviews and refines the guidelines in light of decisions from courts of appeals, sentencing-related research, congressional action, and input from the criminal justice community.



In addition, the Commission trains thousands of criminal justice professionals in the use of the guidelines and serves as a clearinghouse of crime and sentencing information for Congress, the Executive Branch, the Judiciary, criminal justice professionals, and the public.

SENTENCING REFORM ACT OF 1984

BACKGROUND

Disparity in sentencing, certainty of punishment, and crime control have long been issues for Congress, the criminal justice community, and the public. After more than a decade of debate, Congress decided in 1984 that:

- (1) the previously unfettered sentencing discretion accorded federal trial judges needed to be structured;
- (2) the administration of punishment needed to be more certain; and
- (3) specific offenders needed to be targeted for more serious penalties.

Consequently, as part of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (SRA), Congress created the Commission and charged it with formulating national sentencing policies and practices.

The sentencing guidelines are advisory, but they are, as the Supreme Court wrote in 2013, "the lodestone of sentencing," the place where judges begin their contemplation and find the evidence, research, and support they need to craft an equitable sentence.