

(Jan. 22, 2007). Noting that the crack-powder disparity would be a principled basis for a sentence below the guideline range, the Senators stated, "Attention to this problem . . . is long overdue." *Id.* at \*\*27-28. It is time for the Commission to repair this injustice.

We hope that these comments are useful to the Commission. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns, or would like any additional information.

Very truly yours,



JON M. SANDS

Federal Public Defender

*Chair, Federal Defender Sentencing Guidelines  
Committee*

AMY BARON-EVANS

ANNE BLANCHARD

SARA E. NOONAN

JENNIFER COFFIN

Sentencing Resource Counsel

cc: Hon. Ruben Castillo  
Hon. William K. Sessions III  
Commissioner John R. Steer  
Commissioner Michael E. Horowitz  
Commissioner Beryl A. Howell  
Commissioner Dabney Friedrich  
Commissioner *Ex Officio* Edward F. Reilly, Jr.  
Commissioner *Ex Officio* Benton J. Campbell  
Louis Reedt, Acting Deputy Director for the Office of Research and Data  
Judy Sheon, Staff Director  
Ken Cohen, Staff Counsel

January 28, 2007



ERIC SPENCER  
Reg.No. 05832-088/Cardinal Unit  
Federal Medical Center Lexington  
P.O. BOX 14500  
Lexington, KY 40512-4500

RE: CASE NO. 02-001

Dear Hon. Chairman Hinojosa:

I am corresponding to you and this Honorable Commission under an increased wariness pertaining to the "Crack Law" and the Commission's stance on the "unjust" subject.

I have been patiently waiting to see if the Commission is going to propose an amendment to rectify the "Crack Law" and its draconian "100 to 1" ratio. Each Public Register that I view is combed expiditiously in hopes of the Commission submitting an amendment for comment on the public. Not to my surprise, each viewing leaves me a little more exhausted and less hopeful.

The transcript of the Hearing held November 14 seemed to be the final lynchpin to the Commission submitting an amendment to correct the injustice that has dogged "Black Defendants" in the federal criminal justice system since its inception. The testimony was ripe with information that dispelled all the myths surrounding the "Crack Law" and its need to warrant greater punishment.

While I am aware that guideline amendments are normally drafted in November, I was under the assumption that the November 14 Hearing coincided with a prosed amendment on the issue. To my dismay, I must be incorrect or reaching for something that does not exist.

So much has traspired over the years. The debates by legal experts and pundits seem to fall on deaf ears by this very Commission which was created to ensure that sentencing policy was fair and just. With all due respect Mr. Chairman, this is not a Republican or Democrat problem. This is a public policy problem tha twarrants the expertise of men like yourself, as well as women.

No one doubts that this is a touchy issue, at least in the eyes of those who shun the "soft-on-crime" mantra. However, in the arena of public policy, I will have to apply the words of

Sen. Hagel a republican at the most recent hearing on the "Iraq" situation. He proposed to his fellow colleagues of the Foreign Relations Committee, that if they wanted a "safe Job" without the hassles and stress of departing from failed policy on "Iraq", then they should take up the job of "selling shoes".

With all due respect Mr. Chairman, this Commission is in the same spotlight, but along different grounds. The "Crack Law" is Public Policy as well and deserves your most immediate attention. Your Commission was entrusted with the duty to bring to light in the form of amendments the unevenness of the guidelines.

Your Commission mustn't waiver against a failed attempt in 1995 to clear up the "mess". Rejection is but a minute stepping stone to an ultimate equalization much needed and long overdue. The November 14 Hearing was a sheer exercise in what the Commission was created for. The U.S. Congress delegated this authority to your Commission, because as we both can see, their entanglement in other areas of public policy and national interests.

Whether the U.S. Congress rejects another amendment to equalize the ratio to "1 to 1" is their prerogative and shouldn't hold your Commission in any lesser regards. Continuously holding hearing both in your Commission and on Capitol Hill we be a waste of time and resources when the law under §§ 994 created by Congress gives you jurisdiction to make such decisions.

I am enclosing the latest piece of jurisprudence on the subject of the "Crack Law" The Eighth Circuit en banc has rejected the challenge to the "Crack Law" just like every other Court of Appeals accepting the Third Circuit which limited it view on the subject. See UNITED STATES V. SPEARS, 469 F3d 1166.

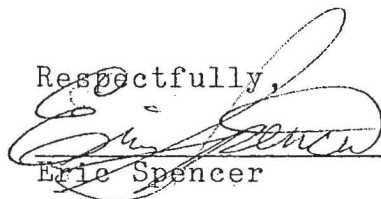
Crime, Law, and Punishment produces exaggerated opinions and beliefs that prove fatal unto themselves. The "tough on crime" hallmark of politicians' campaign stumps have no place where the law is blatantly racist whether or not on its face. The uncontroverted information you have before your committee is enough to feel comfortable in making the decision to propose a "1 to 1" equalization ratio. You and your committee will only be following the will of Congress by creating fair and just sentencing practice.

In ascertaining the politics of law, I truly believe that an amemendment would become new guideline law, if it was submitted by May 1, 2007. We need not be naive that a new Congress chaired by several prominent African-American members, who themselves have been the benefactors of racism and a racist system, would not take exception to such an amendment to equalize the "Crack Law". In a book I am currently reading, "The Audacity of Hope", Sen Barack informs me that in politics, it's all about the votes. whether one agrees with or against the "equalization" of the Crack/Cocaine disparity, I feel if the amendment perhaps trickles to a full Congressional Debate (which I don't think it will), there will be enough votes to ensure that it becomes new guideline law.

Mr. Chairman in conclusion, you and your Commission must question whether there is a commitment on your behalf to make sure justice is done. If the answer is in the affirmative, then Congress will be pressed to continue to uphold a racist "regime" at a time when the remnants of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath still linger in the minds of many. If the answer is in the negative, then the Commission will be nothing more than a patsy and "do-boy" for a racist law that continues to have a dire affect on the African-American Community.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for your time and personally I believe you and your colleagues are too wise and learned in the area of Crime and "Punishment" to begin a second career in selling shoes.

Respectfully,



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Eric Spencer

cc.

Ruben Castillio, Vice Chair  
John Conyers, Chairman, House Judiciary Committee  
Patrick Leahy, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Carolyn Kilpatrick, Chairwoman, Congressional Black Caucus  
Nkechi Taifa, Senior Policy Analyst, Open Society Policy Center

17 February 2007

3740 Blaisdell Ave  
Minneapolis MN 55409

United States Sentencing Commission  
Attention: Public Affairs  
One Columbus Circle NE  
Suite 2-500  
Washington, DC 20002-8002

Re: Federal sentencing laws for crack and powder cocaine offenses.

Dear Commissioners:

Please consider these comments as you consider reexamining the current sentencing laws for crack and powder cocaine offenses.

Under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, the law has punished crack cocaine offenders much more severely than other drug offenders, creating a 100:1 sentencing disparity between powder and crack cocaine offenses. Many of the assumptions used in determining the 100:1 ratio have now been proven wrong, as numerous scientific and medical experts have determined that the pharmacological effects of cocaine are the same regardless of form. That is to say, powder cocaine and crack cocaine are not significantly different in terms of their strength or effects on users.

The current disparity in sentences for crack-related crimes as compared to crimes involving powder cocaine is a key factor in the disproportionately high incarceration rates of African Americans, who constitute more than 80 percent of the defendants sentenced under the harsh federal crack cocaine laws, even though more than 66 percent of crack cocaine users in the United States are white or Hispanic.

The racial impact of these unfair sentencing rules is compounded by the fact that whites are disproportionately less likely to be prosecuted for drug offenses in the first place; when prosecuted, they are more likely to be acquitted; and even if convicted, they are far less likely to be sent to prison. The end result of this is severe racial disparities in arrests, prosecutions, and incarcerations between African Americans on one side and whites on the other.

I urge that changes be considered to address these disparities and their effects. Specifically:

- The quantities of crack cocaine that trigger federal prosecution and sentencing must be equalized with and increased to the current levels of powder cocaine. There is no rational medical or penological reason for the 100:1 disparity between crack and powder cocaine, and instead it causes an unjustified racial disparity in our penal system.
- Federal prosecutions must be properly focused on the high-level traffickers of both crack and powder cocaine.

- In order for judges to exercise appropriate discretion and consider mitigating factors in sentencing, mandatory minimums for crack and powder offenses must be eliminated, including the mandatory minimum for simple possession.

I thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gabe Ormsby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Gabe Ormsby

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

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing this correspondence in the interest of all that is Just and Fair within our Judicial system and the constitutional rights afforded to all American citizens. And the consternation of the Federal Crack Cocaine Sentencing Policy,

I find many appalling positions of the Federal Crack Cocaine Sentencing Policy, but giving in to brevity, I will only address two; (1) The inference that a plant ( the cocoa plant ) when, processed into one illegal substance can then be processed (with additives that are nether illegal or harmful) into another illegal substance, yet in the end, still be the same, illegal substance, cocaine. When one is adjudicated in violation of the latter he/she is penalized much more severely then one adjudicated in violation of the former. How is this real? (2) The fact that the policy itself is biased, from its conception to its implication. Being a student of World History, American History, Culture History and the history My Life, I can not help but wonder if it was ever intended to be fair. I am sure that the composers of this law were clear, on the racial make up of those being in possession of the so called different cocaine(s), when they drafted this sentencing policy. It is known that the preference for this illegal substance in the African American community is in the hard form and conversely in the Caucasian community , a preference for the soft form, of the same illegal substance. This being said, how is it justice, that the punishment of two individuals, being in possession of the same weight/amount, of the same illegal (hard or soft) substance, be adjudicated so unfairly? .One individual receiving a much greater term of imprisonment than the another.

Commissioner, I know, conceptionally we as citizens should hold tightly to the belief that justice is blind. Yet as an African American I hold this concept to be more of an assumption than a belief (in the true since of its meaning). I could rest easier if my opinions were without merit, invalid and untrue. However, thy are not. American History, Culture History and Life History has taught me, that Lady Justice, is not blind. How I wish she were. Since she is not, someone has to champion the cause of those who have sat and will sit on her biased scales.

Thank you Commissioner for indulging this correspondence.

Sincerely,

Murrell D.Cash

Hamover, NH

March 12, 2007.

US Sentencing Commission  
1 Columbus Circle NE Suite 2-500  
Washington, DC 20002-8002  
Att: Public Affairs

To Whom it May Concern —

I am writing to protest the great disparities in sentencing for possession and distribution of crack and powder cocaine. It leads to extreme unfairness in resulting convictions. This matter needs to be revisited and fairly acted upon.

Sincerely yours,

Alice W. Conkey



**From:** John Serop Simonian <serop2@alumni.nd.edu>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Mon, Feb 19, 2007 8:40 PM  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Federal Sentencing Laws for Crack- and Powder-cocaine Offenses

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to make an official public comment regarding federal sentencing for crack- and powder-cocaine offenses.

As you well know, current federal law includes mandatory minimum prison sentences for those convicted of possessing certain amounts of cocaine. One of the main problems with these mandatory minimums is that they are grossly unfair. An individual convicted of possessing 5 grams of crack cocaine receives the same sentence as an individual convicted of possessing 100 grams of powder cocaine. This despite the fact that scientists and epidemiologists have shown that cocaine is equally dangerous in either form.

Harsher sentencing for those possessing crack cocaine is inherently racially biased, as African-Americans are more likely to use crack cocaine than powder cocaine. Moreover, African-Americans are also more likely to live in cities than whites, and crack cocaine is more prevalent in cities than it is in suburbs, where most whites live and where mostly powder cocaine is used.

For these and other reasons, mandatory-minimum sentencing laws should be abandoned so that judges can take other mitigating circumstances into consideration when meting out sentences. If mandatory-minimum sentences must exist, they should be changed so that they are not racially biased, as the cocaine-sentencing minimums are. Possession of cocaine is possession of cocaine. It shouldn't matter what form the cocaine takes.

Sincerely,  
John Serop Simonian

**From:** thomas carter <tomcarter28205@yahoo.com>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Mon, Feb 19, 2007 1:44 PM  
**Subject:** Comment concerning federal sentencing laws for crack/cocaine possession

Dear Sir or Madam:

These are my comments intended for the commission reviewing the disparity in crack/powder federal sentencing laws.

Certainly a heavy user could do more than five grams in a night. Do they deserve to be-prosecuted for trafficking?

No doubt, the high from smoking "crack" cocaine is more intense than that from snorting powder, but it should be noted that powder can be injected into the bloodstream, which I would argue is a more intense high than smoking. Also, some users of crack cocaine control their use in a way that makes the "high" similar to snorting powder.

It is my belief that the laws for crack cocaine possession should be brought into line (or at least fairly close) with those for powder possession.

Sincerely,  
Tom Carter  
PO Box 1962

Albemarle, NC 28002

tomcarter28205@yahoo.com

704-982-9239

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Any questions? Get answers on any topic at [www.Answers.yahoo.com](http://www.Answers.yahoo.com). Try it now.

**From:** "Redman, Dia A" <Dia.Redman@ci.minneapolis.mn.us>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Fri, Feb 9, 2007 3:37 PM  
**Subject:** Gross disparities in drug sentences! Mandatory sentences for crack and powder cocaine offenses must be eliminated!

The 100:1 sentencing disparity between powder and crack cocaine offenses is unjust and biased. Hasn't it been determined that the effects of cocaine are the same regardless of form.

The sentencing laws for crack are racist as are most sentences for people of color who fill all jails and prisons comparably to those of Caucasian decent.

"The racial impact of these unfair sentencing rules is compounded by the fact that whites are disproportionately less likely to be prosecuted for drug offenses in the first place; when prosecuted, they are more likely to be acquitted; and even if convicted, they are far less likely to be sent to prison. And the quantities of crack cocaine that trigger federal prosecution and sentencing must be equalized with and increased to the current levels of powder cocaine.":

Dia Redman

**From:** "Stephanie" <smschueler@comcast.net>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Fri, Feb 9, 2007 3:38 PM  
**Subject:** Federal Crack Cocaine Law

United States Sentencing Commission  
One Columbus Circle, NE, Suite 2-500  
Washington, DC 20002-8002  
Attention: Public Affairs

Dear United States Sentencing Commission,

The quantities of crack cocaine that trigger federal prosecution and sentencing must be equalized with, and increased to, the current levels of powder cocaine. Federal prosecutions should focus on high-level traffickers of both crack and powder cocaine. And mandatory minimums for crack and powder offenses, especially the mandatory minimum for simple possession, should be eliminated.

Thank you,

Stephanie Schueler  
1041 N 475 E  
Chesterton, IN 46304  
smschueler@comcast.net

**From:** Hspagna <hspagna@aol.com>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Sat, Feb 10, 2007 7:23 AM  
**Subject:** Sentencing disparities - crack/powder

The escalating costs of the unsuccessful WAR ON DRUGS are compounded by the costs of the increasing numbers of incarcerations for users of crack cocaine.

The disparities of sentences for users of powder cocaine and those of the users of crack cocaine are causing this increase in incarcerations. We are supposed to be the BEST at everything, but have more people in jail than any other nation.

Sentences should include treatment plans. Addictions of all kinds need treatment while the user is confined. If no treatment is provided, the punishment is cruel.

Please use your power to require equal sentences and PROVIDE treatment for all addictions.

Thank you.

Hilda Zahn Spagna  
262-B South Paseo Quinta  
Green Valley, AZ 85614-7159 (520) 648-0439

**From:** "Kim Brummell" <kbrummell@nc.rr.com>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Sat, Feb 10, 2007 10:16 AM  
**Subject:** Crack/Powder Sentencing Disparities

02/10/2007

United States Sentencing Commission  
1 Columbus Circle NE Ste 2-500  
Washington, D.C. 20002-8002

Dear Public Affairs:

I'm writing as a citizen of the US & member of the ACLU in reference to the crack/powder drug disparities laws. For decades, these laws have been bias and unfairly executed. There are numerous reasons why.

Over 80% of the prison populations who have been sentenced under these laws are African-American. Then you have over 60% of the actual crack/cocaine users are considered white or Hispanic. The mandatory minimum sentences, doesn't give judges their proper sentencing discretions with drug offenses. Crack cocaine and powder cocaine tend to have similar effects on the body. Therefore, the sentencing should be equal for people convicted for crack cocaine or powder cocaine. There is another question. African-Americans represent the majority of offenders convicted. The cost of illegal drugs can range in the billions of dollars worldwide. The minority race has never been seen upon as rich or wealthy. So, who brings the drugs into the United States? Who are there immediate points of contact? Do these sentencing guidelines apply to these distributors? How often are the exporters & importers of drugs convicted compared to the street-level drug-dealers or local kingpins? People who aren't African-American tend to receive less prison time or none for the same drug offenses. This is a racial disparity. There are many African-Americans not given the same job opportunities, salaries, benefits or find themselves unemployed. This isn't an attempt to play the race card or make excuses. But, as far as the US government is concerned, equality should be levied fairly as possible, with all the laws.

We have leaders who have died in this country fighting the same thing. Please consider revising the crack cocaine/powder sentencing laws.

Sincerely,

Kim Brummell  
810 East C St. #55  
Butner, N.C. 27509

**From:** "ttweed@wildrockies.org" <ttweed@wildrockies.org>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Sat, Feb 10, 2007 5:27 PM  
**Subject:** public comment: crack/powder cocaine sentencing guidelines

Dear U.S. Sentencing Commission:

20 years and thousands of data points prove beyond any doubt what is obvious logically: as every one of many scientific studies shows that powder and crack cocaine are equal in potency and effect on animals, your guidelines on this crime have created thousands of injustices—a mistake you are charged with avoiding. Also, unjust and contrary to your existence is the obvious racial discrimination that this sentencing guideline has created.

Tony Tweedale  
404 E Spruce #2  
Missoula MT 59802

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**From:** <dj423@bellsouth.net>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov.>  
**Date:** Sun, Feb 11, 2007 3:10 PM  
**Subject:** recommendations for new guidelines

I urge you to make it possible for judges to exercise appropriate discretion in sentencing. It is my opinion that mandatory minimum sentences for crack and powder offenses must be eliminated, including the mandatory minimum for simple possession. And the quantities of crack cocaine that trigger federal prosecution and sentencing must be equalized with and increased to the current levels of powder cocaine.

My background is in professional social work, and I have seen far too many young men have their entire lives derailed, for what in truth is little more than youthful indiscretion. Most of these guys would learn their lesson from a slap on the wrist, not being truncheoned to death, figuratively speaking.

Please put some common sense back into the sentencing guidelines.

Thank you.

Donna Selquist



**From:** Fred Perloff <fperloff@mind.net>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Sun, Feb 11, 2007 9:09 PM  
**Subject:** Sentencing Laws for Crack and Powder Cocaine Offenses

To: US Sentencing Commission  
Re: Sentencing Laws for Crack and Powder Cocaine Offenses

Dear Sir or Madam:

First of all, I would like to thank you for your willingness to re-examine the Sentencing Laws. You have an opportunity to utilize both the latest scientific and medical information about cocaine, and the sociological data which point to the vast racial inequalities that result from current policy.

It is my understanding that the medical research has determined that crack and powder cocaine are similar in their pharmacological effects. The 100:1 sentencing disparity does not reflect the physiological effect of the two forms of cocaine. I would recommend that the quantities of crack that trigger federal prosecution be made equal to the the current levels of powder cocaine.

I was horrified to discover that African Americans make up 15 percent of the country's drug users, but 74 percent of those sentenced to prison for a drug offense. Also, that African Americans comprise 80 percent of the defendants sentenced for crack offenses, while comprising less than a third of crack users.

I volunteer at the maximum security penitentiary in my state, leading groups that explore issues of justice and healing the aftermath of crime. I have seen the results in my state of mandatory minimum sentences, and I am unalterably opposed to them. When a person is given a mandatory sentence there is no incentive to reform him/herself, in fact a cynical attitude is likely to set in.

I would recommend eliminating mandatory sentencing for simple possession. Federal prosecution should focus on high level traffickers of both crack and powder cocaine. Criminalization of possession is a proven failure at solving our country's tragic substance abuse problems.

Thank you for your consideration,

Fred Perloff  
164 5th St.  
Ashland, OR 97520

**From:** "Colin Fiske" <colin.fiske@gmail.com>  
**To:** <pubaffairs@ussc.gov>  
**Date:** Sun, Feb 11, 2007 9:57 PM  
**Subject:** Review of Sentencing Laws for Crack and Powder Cocaine Offenses

United States Sentencing Commission  
One Columbus Circle, NE, Suite 2-500  
Washington, DC 20002-8002  
Attention: Public Affairs

Dear Commissioners:

It has come to my attention that the Commission is currently reviewing sentencing laws for crack and powder cocaine offenses. As a citizen concerned with ensuring that federal law in general, and sentencing law in particular, is just and fair to all alleged offenders, regardless of their race or class, I urge you to advocate an adjustment of sentencing laws for crack-related offenses to bring them into line with those for powder cocaine-related offenses.

It is my understanding that crack and powder cocaine have the same pharmacological effects on users, but they are generally popular within different demographic segments of the United States population. Stricter sentencing laws for crack-related offenses - whatever their original intent - have therefore had the documented effect of punishing poor and African American dealers of cocaine products much more harshly than richer, Caucasian dealers, despite the fact that the offenses are for all practical purposes the same. Imagine if the same principle were applied to sentencing in homicide cases, and a cheaper murder weapon required a harsher sentence for the defendant. That would be considered ludicrous, and so is this. It is an unjust, untenable situation, and I believe that you cannot in good conscience let it continue any longer: it is your job to ensure that the same crime is punishable by the same sentence, regardless of the race or class of the offender.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Colin Fiske  
333 7th St S, Apt. #3  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

March 30, 2007

**VIA EMAIL**

United States Sentencing Commission  
One Columbus Circle, NE  
Suite 2-500  
Washington, DC 20002-8002  
Attention: Public Affairs  
Dear Commissioners:

**Re: USSC Federal Register request for public comment, January 30, 2007**

I'm writing the Commission today with the hope that you will do something about one of the most notorious injustices in this country's criminal justice system - - - the crack cocaine laws. My name is Karen Garrison and I am writing on behalf of my twin sons Lawrence and Lamont Garrison who were indicted on April 7, 1998 along with 13 others charging them with Conspiracy to distribute Cocaine and Cocaine Base in violation of 21 U.S.C. §841 *et. al.* On October 16, 1998, the Court of Eastern District of Virginia sentenced my sons Lawrence to 15.67 years and Lamont to 19.58 years. Lamont received the enhanced sentence because he testified that he was not a crack dealer, but was in fact found guilty. Their sentence was also higher because the court was allowed to convert powder cocaine to crack cocaine at sentencing via "the preponderance of evidence." If the drugs had remained cocaine quantities of powder Lawrence would have received a sentence of 121-151 months according to the guidelines. His brother Lamont's sentence would have been 151-188 months with that 2-point enhancement.

Now I must add that I am not here to debate the guilt or innocence of my sons, but I am here to call into question the harsh sentences that they received.

The experience hearing a guilty verdict being handed down was traumatic enough for me, but the sentencing was heart wrenching. My sons were first time non-violent offenders. I could not believe that this could happen to anyone, let alone our family. Neither Lawrence nor Lamont had ever been in trouble before in school growing up or in college. They never even stayed out all night. My boys made the honor roll, were tracked into gifted and talented programs, and had nearly perfect school attendance. I taught them faith as I had learned from my grandmother.

After seven years of college, my twin sons were in the final stretch of their bachelor's degrees and anticipating their graduation from Howard University was so exciting for me. At that time their conviction seemed all so new and unjust, but now I have found that it is normal. I now know for sure that Lawrence and Lamont Garrison are casualties of an

unjust and racial war on drugs.

We had no money for attorneys. My sons had court appointed lawyers for the trial. However, Lawrence and Lamont believed that justice would prevail. The court appointed lawyers said they would get no more than 10 years, which still seemed terrible. The trial lasted for three days. Prior to the indictment, there was no search warrant issued, no drugs, nor guns found in our house. In addition, both of my sons took drug tests that came back negative. The jury was never given this information.

After the trial a local news stations interviewed the jurors. One of the jurors said he thought that they would just get "a slap on the hand." Another juror cried after seeing it on the news. I could not believe that this could be happening to our family.

How do you fight an unjust justice system? I felt scared at every turn, but I could not let my sons sense it. It was a whirlwind. I fell out in the courtroom when the judge read "guilty." I could not be strong. I think my heart stopped. I could not stop crying. I felt lost and alone.

It is also my hope that as you consider equalizing the crack to cocaine ratio, you also consider making the law retroactive, so that Lawrence and Lamont have an opportunity to once again become contributing members of society. I hope that you will not stand to see another young person's potential destroyed and change this law so that crack is treated the same as powder cocaine. Thank your for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Karen Garrison