

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2022

Judge Carlton W. Reeves
Chair, United States Sentencing Commission
One Columbus Circle, NE
Suite 2-500, South Lobby
Washington, DC, 20002-8002

Dear Commissioner Reeves,

I write to congratulate you and your fellow Commissioners on your confirmation to the United States Sentencing Commission and to express my gratitude for the first voting quorum in more than three years. The Commission is one of the most critical agencies in the federal government, and I look forward to watching the new slate of Commissioners address some of our most pressing criminal justice issues.

The Commission's work is essential to the operation of our federal judiciary and our criminal justice system. By reducing sentencing disparities and promoting transparency across the federal courts, the Commission makes sentencing policies and practices clearer and more understandable to judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and defendants across the country. In so doing, the Commission helps ensure that every American enjoys the right to equal justice under the law. As an independent, bipartisan agency, the Commission also plays a special role in its advice and assistance to Congress and the executive branch. Government officials across the political spectrum can rely on the Commission to provide crucial advice and policy guidance that is objective and firmly rooted in data.

I ask the Commission to recommit to its efforts to institute expertise without regard for the partisan disagreement that so often confronts the political branches of our government. By taking the necessary time and effort to conduct studies and analyze data, and by engaging with stakeholders on all sides of any given issue, I am confident that the Commission will maintain and augment its reputation for fairness as it continues to provide reports and recommendations.

The membership of the Commission ensures that a wide variety of perspectives have a seat at the table. The Commission includes both Democrats and Republicans, as well as judges who know how the Commission's decisions will impact everybody in a courtroom. The ex officio nonvoting memberships of representatives of the United States Parole Commission and the Attorney General further ensure the presence of vital viewpoints in the Commission's discussions. The depth and breadth of perspectives present on the Commission are a critical part of the Commission's expert role.

I also believe that the Commission and its membership might be further strengthened with the addition of another perspective: an ex officio nonvoting member who is a public defender. The presence of a public defender on the Commission would help bring balance and expertise to the Commission and its work. The presence of such a voice would help the Commission speak even

more strongly on criminal justice issues. I have introduced legislation, the Sentencing Commission Improvements Act, that would create this new member of the Commission, and I urge the Commissioners to consider recommending this addition to Congress.

I look forward to working with the Commission in the future and to hearing its recommendations. I congratulate you again on your confirmations and thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C.A. Booker', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator