

310 Woodrow Ave.
Selma, AL 36701

November 11, 2007

The United States Sentencing Commission
1 Columbus Circle N.E.
Ste. 2-500
South Lobby
Washington, D.C. 20002-8002

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Rev. Ocie Acoff. Due to unforeseen surgery that I had on November 10, 2007, I wanted to make certain that my testimony will be a part of the public hearing on sentencing. First, I would like to thank the federal agencies that were instrumental in shutting down the crack dealers that were operating in the 1400 block of St. Phillip Street in Selma, Alabama. Before the arrest of those individuals, the residents of that neighborhood lived in constant fear due to the random shootings and other criminal activities that took place there. I can share with you stories of a WWII veteran that had to sleep on the floor at night for fear of being hit by a stray bullet. Elderly citizens could not sit on their porches due to fear. After the raid, there was jubilation by the residents because these individuals were put out of business. At this time, Selma, Alabama has very limited law enforcement resources. To allow known crack dealers back into our community at this time would be devastating because of limited law enforcement.

I understand the issue of racism has arose in regards to the sentencing of cocaine and crack dealers. From my experience as a probation officer for more than 20 years, director of the Perry Vainer Educational and Training Center for 9 years, and as a pastor for 31 years, I have seen the effects of what crack can do to an individual. I am not here to lessen the effects of cocaine, but crack has been devastating to our community. Individuals' lives and families have been destroyed because of the evilness of the drug. For an individual to sell crack to another person is like giving a child a loaded gun, the ultimate end being that one life will be destroyed. Even after the crack dealers had been incarcerated and taken off the street, their works still follow them by way of the addict. The addict is a nuisance to the community by burglarizing homes and vehicles, and stealing copper to support their habit.

I feel strongly that every criminal act that the crack addict commits, the dealer has contributed to it. I understand that there are other organizations, individuals, and family members of crack dealers are opposing what they call "racist sentencing." I also understand the hurt of those family members who long for their sons, daughters, husbands and wives to come home. I too, sit longing for family members to come home. I know of many who are longing

for
their loved ones to come back from drug addiction. Crack causes parents to turn away from children. It causes mothers to bring children into the world already addicted and they never had a choice in the matter.

I would urge this commission to take a long, hard look at the sentencing in regards to crack cocaine dealers. I feel that the crack dealer is a nuisance to the very liberties that we as U.S. citizens enjoy because every addict that a dealer sales to becomes a liability to society in more ways than one.

I want to take this opportunity to thank The Commission in advance for allowing me to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Ocie Acoff