

**THOMAS W. BISHOP  
CHIEF U.S. PROBATION OFFICER  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
TESTIMONY BEFORE U.S. SENTENCING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 10, 2009**

**I am honored to be selected to participate in the regional hearings in recognition of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984. In preparation of my participation on the panel “View from the Probation Office,” I spent considerable time interviewing officers responsible for interpreting and applying the guidelines. My testimony will provide an overview of their comments and suggestions regarding the guidelines and Booker. I will touch on the role of probation officers in light of Booker, and discuss some specific recommendations, which include:**

**1) Establishing policy which would require parties to provide probation officers prior notice of their intent to request a variance. This would allow officers time to verify information, related to a variance, prior to sentencing.**

**2) A recommendation which involves the lowering of penalties involving cocaine and crack and a recommendation to Congress to consider reducing the drug mandatory minimums.**

**3) A recommendation to increase the penalties involving fraud related offenses. I will speak of the increase of this activity in our community and the damage it is causing not only locally, but nationally.**

**4) I will close by discussing the American Bar Association’s recommendation to amend Rule 32 of the Federal of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. The amendment, which we oppose, would require officers to provide copies of all documents received during the course of an investigation to opposing parties. The same amendment would require probation officers to provide a written summary of all oral information received during the course of an investigation to all parties.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to share a “View from the Probation Office.”**