

Remarks by Chair Carlton W. Reeves

**Public Hearing of the United States Sentencing
Commission**

**Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Center
March 7, 2023**

Good morning! I am the Chair of the United States Sentencing Commission, Carlton W. Reeves. I welcome you all to our third day of hearings on our current slate of proposed amendments to the sentencing guidelines. I thank each of you for joining us, whether you are with us in this room or attending via livestream. We appreciate your interest in the work of your United States Sentencing Commission.

I have the honor of opening this hearing with my fellow Commissioners. To my left, we have Vice Chair Claire Murray, Vice Chair Laura Mate, and Commissioner Candice Wong. To my right, we have Vice Chair Luis Felipe Restrepo, Commissioner Claria Horne Boom, and Commissioner John

Gleeson. We are also joined by *ex-officio* Commissioner Jonathan Wroblewski and *ex-officio* Commissioner Patricia Cushwa.

I must begin by noting the diligence, dedication, and contributions of every member of the Commission's staff. Their work is hard. Their work is indispensable. And their work is appreciated. I speak on behalf of the Commissioners and the public when I say to our employees: thank you for all you have done, all you are doing, and all you will continue to do.

I want to welcome our esteemed panelists. They have come from across the country to provide us with their testimony. In doing so, they join the over 2,000 people who have already submitted comments to the Commission.

At our last hearing, I made a promise: when you speak to the Commission, you will be heard. I am happy to report that we at the Commission have kept that promise. When we have read carefully researched written comments, we have been

persuaded. When we have heard testimony grounded in lived experience, we have been moved. And when we deliberate, we find ourselves constantly citing what panelists and commentators have told us. If you have spoken to the Commission, I can say for a fact: you have been heard.

And so I remind our panelists and the public: you will be heard because you must be heard. Commissioners and our staff are committed to doing our jobs in our criminal justice system – with a focus on that word, “justice.” But we can’t do justice without your data. Your expertise. Your perspectives.

While our hearings may be ending this week, our need for your input is not. We will continue to accept public comments until March 14th. Panelists, if you come away from today with more to say, please provide us with supplemental testimony before the deadline. I also urge members of the public to submit comments via our online portal at www.USSC.gov. However and whenever you speak to the Commission, you will be heard.

Today, we will be hearing testimony on proposed amendments regarding firearms offenses, drug offenses, and resolving conflicts among the courts of appeals. Tomorrow, we will be taking testimony on proposed amendments regarding the career offender guideline and how criminal history is addressed in the guidelines.

Panelists, you will each have five minutes to speak. Know that we have read your written submissions. Your time will begin when this light turns green. You have one minute left when it turns yellow, and no time left when it turns red. If I cut you off, please understand I am not being rude as we have so much to cover today and tomorrow and a limited time to hear from everyone.

For our audio system to work, you'll need make sure that your microphone is on before speaking. Look for a little green light. You'll also need to speak close to the microphone. And I mean close – inches, not feet!

When all panelists have finished speaking, Commissioners may ask you questions. I am certain they will do so. Thank you for joining us. I look forward to a very productive hearing.