



**U.S. Sentencing Commission**  
One Columbus Circle NE  
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## **NEWS ADVISORY**

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**COMMENT OF JUDGE PATTI B. SARIS,  
CHAIR, UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION,  
ON THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE'S BIPARTISAN VOTE  
TO REPORT THE SMARTER SENTENCING ACT**

“Today’s action by the Senate Judiciary Committee to report legislation to reduce severe mandatory minimum penalties for drug offenders is an important first step toward addressing rising federal prison costs and a federal prison population that far exceeds capacity. I am gratified that the Committee acted consistently with several of the specific recommendations the United States Sentencing Commission made in its 2011 report on mandatory minimum penalties and again to the Committee this fall.

I hope that the full Senate and the House of Representatives will act to pass this legislation which will begin to address concerns about prison costs and population and to improve the fairness of federal sentences. The Commission will continue to monitor Congress’s work on this crucial issue and to evaluate whether amendments to the federal sentencing guidelines may aid in these efforts as well.”

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