

Year In Review

United States Sentencing Commission – Fiscal Year 2010

On October 20–21, 2009, the United States Sentencing Commission held in Denver, Colorado, the fifth in a series of regional public hearings on federal sentencing policy to mark the 25th anniversary of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984 (SRA). The Commission held these public hearings across the country to engage federal sentencing experts on issues related to federal sentencing policy and the implementation of the SRA over the past 25 years.

On October 21, 2009, the United States Senate confirmed Chief United States District Judge William K. Sessions III of Cornwall, Vermont, as Commission chair.

On November 19–20, 2009, the Commission held in Austin, Texas, the sixth in its series of regional public hearings.

On December 15, 2009, the Commission announced the appointment of a new chair (Ms. Susan Smith Howley) and three new members to its Victims Advisory Group (VAG). The VAG is a standing advisory group that provides the Commission insight and advice on the operation of the federal sentencing guidelines from the perspective of victims of federal crime.

With its hearing on January 20–21, 2010, in Phoenix, Arizona, the Commission concluded its nationwide series of regional public hearings on federal sentencing policy.

The United States Senate confirmed Ketanji B. Jackson as a member of the Commission on February 11, 2010, and President Barack Obama designated her a vice chair on February 12, 2010.

On March 17, 2010, the Commission held a public hearing in Washington, D.C., on its proposed guideline amendments.

At the March and September 2010 meetings of the Judicial Conference of the United States,

Commission Chair William K. Sessions III updated the Conference on the activities of the Commission.

On May 1, 2010, the Commission promulgated sentencing guideline amendments that expand the availability of alternatives to incarceration, including drug or mental health treatment options, and that address the relevance of certain specific offender characteristics in sentencing. The Commission promulgated guideline amendments on additional topics including hate crimes, the calculation of a defendant's criminal history, and sentencing corporate offenders. The package of amendments became effective November 1, 2010.

On May 27, 2010, the Commission held in Washington, D.C., a public hearing on statutory mandatory minimum penalties in the federal sentencing system. At the hearing, the Commission heard testimony from federal sentencing experts and practitioners, including representatives from the United States Department of Justice, the defense bar, law enforcement, community interest groups, and members of academia.

On June 16–18, 2010, the Commission held the Annual National Seminar on the Federal Sentencing Guidelines in New Orleans, Louisiana. Attending the event were a record number of registrants consisting of more than 1,000 federal judges, probation officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other professionals from across the country.

Throughout 2010, the Commission released a number of publications, including

- *2009 Annual Report*
- *2009 Sourcebook of Federal Sentencing Statistics*
- *History of the Child Pornography Guidelines*
- *Overview of Federal Criminal Cases*
- *Demographic Differences in Federal Sentencing Practices: An Update of the Booker Report's Multivariate Regression Analysis*
- *Guide to Publications and Resources*

- *Federal Sentencing Data and Analysis*
- *Federal Offenders Sentenced to Supervised Release*
- *Results of Survey of United States District Judges: January 2010 through March 2010*
- *Computation of “Recency” Criminal History Points Under USSG §4A1.1(e)*
- *2010 Guidelines Manual*
- *Supplement to the 2010 Guidelines Manual*

Throughout 2010, Commission staff trained more than 6,000 judges, probation officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and others at 126 training sessions across the country (including ongoing programs sponsored by the Federal Judicial Center and other agencies).

The Commission continued to provide guideline application assistance to approximately 100 callers each month via its HelpLine.

The Commission received documentation on 83,946 cases sentenced in fiscal year 2010. Additionally, the Commission received documents in 4,120 cases in which a resentencing or other modification of sentence occurred.

During 2010, the Commission continued its temporary duty program for probation officers and assistant federal defenders.

The year 2010, as used in this report, refers to the fiscal year 2010 (October 1, 2009, through September 30, 2010).