MASSACHUSETTS SENTENCING COMMISSION

Public Hearing

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PROCEEDINGS

2 (9:37 a.m.)

JUDGE LU: All right. Good morning everybody.

I'm going to speak nice and loud so everyone can hear me real good.

My name is Judge Jack Lu. I'm a Judge of the Massachusetts Superior Court. I am Chair of the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission.

We are grateful to everyone who is attending this morning and through the day. We welcome you.

We're going to, we're going to exercise some discretion with the time limit, but there will be a time limit enforced depending on how many people are waiting.

You are being recorded. I don't know if you're being video recorded, but you're definitely being audio recorded. Please be aware of that. And your remarks will be very quickly transcribed and provided, a transcript will be provided to all of the Members of the Sentencing Commission.

Any written comments that you submit in place of or in addition to your verbal comments are also going to be put together and bound and given to all Members of the Sentencing Commission right away.

And we'll give careful attention to your, your comments both verbal and written.

I'm going to ask at this time that the Members of the

1 | Sentencing Commission introduce themselves.

We might as well start right down at the, at the end there with, with Judge Georges.

JUDGE GEORGES: Thank you, Your Honor.

Good morning, everyone. My name is Sergio Georges, Jr., and I'm an Associate Justice at the Boston Municipal Court.

MS. FRIEDMAN: Good morning, folks. My name is Pamela Friedman. I'm the Chief of the Victim Witness Unit at the Norfolk District Attorney's Office representing the victim witness advocates throughout Massachusetts.

MR. MCMURRAY: Good morning. My name is Pat McMurray. I'm the Undersecretary for Homeland Security.

MS. SMITH: Good morning everyone. My name is Yolanda Smith.

I am the Superintendent at the Suffolk County Sheriff's

Department House of Correction.

MR. REDDEN: Good morning. I am John Redden. I am an attorney with the Committee for Public Counsel Services which, as some of you may know, is the public defender agency for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MS. DOYLE: Good morning. I'm Mary Alice Doyle. I'm the
Deputy First Assistant for District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett
in Essex County.

MR. ETENBERG: Good morning. My name is Peter Etenberg. I'm a private criminal defense lawyer practicing in Worcester.

JUDGE FIANDACA: Good morning. My name is Kenneth Fiandaca.

1 I'm a Judge at Boston Municipal Court, and I sit in Roxbury. JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Good morning. My name is Mary Beth 2 3 Heffernan, and I'm a representative of the District Court. I'm a Judge that, I sit in Newton and Quincy. 4 5 MS. HEALY: Good morning. I'm Maura Healy, the Attorney 6 General. MR. MAZZONE: Dean Mazzone, Assistant Attorney General 7 8 designee on the Sentencing Commission. 9 MR. ROSENTHAL: Martin Rosenthal, Defense Attorney with the 10 Mass Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers on the 11 Commission. 12 MR. GLENNY: I'm Brian Glenny, First Assistant District Attorney, Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office. 13 MR. CALLAHAN: Good morning. Michael Callahan. I'm the 14 15 Executive Director of the Massachusetts Parole Board. 16 MS. O'BRIEN: Good morning. Carol Higgins O'Brien, 17 Commissioner of the Department of Correction. JUDGE LU: Okay. I can't quite see the ends of the table 18 19 very well, but I believe that's everybody. 20 So the com, Sentencing Commission has been working hard for 21 a year, slightly more than a year, along with various subcommittees of the Commission on looking very carefully at 22 23 sentencing in Massachusetts. We've heard from nationally 24 respected and internationally respected experts on data driven

criminal justice policy and sentencing. We have appointed an

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outside technical advisor, James Byrne, a professor at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, an internationally recognized data expert on criminal justice.

We're looking forward to your comments today.

I want to now turn it over to Attorney General Maura Healy.

MS. HEALY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for that opportunity.

Good morning to all of you.

As I said, I'm Maura Healy, the Attorney General of the Commonwealth.

Once upon a time, I was a civil rights attorney and also a prosecutor, and I bring that lens to this experience.

I want to say at the outset that our office is very pleased to be able to participate on the Sentencing Commission and be part of this very important bylaw we are having in the state and indeed we are having across this country.

I want to welcome everyone in attendance today, members of the public, who have taken the time to come forward and offer their perspective. It's so important.

I want to thank Judge Lu for his tremendous leadership of this rejuvenated Sentencing Commission and certainly all of my colleagues represented up here today on the panel who have put in, completely committed to put in over the coming weeks and months considerable effort, time, and attention to this very important issue.

I'm delighted to be joined by my colleague, Assistant
Attorney General Mazzone from my office, and there are other
Members of my office in attendance this morning because we
know how important this issue is to our Commonwealth, to the
health and wellbeing of residences, and to communities and
neighborhoods across this state.

This is an important day. It's an important event. This is a public hearing, the public's first opportunity to address together at one time the Members of this new rejuvenated Sentencing Commission.

The point here is to take testimony that will assist

Members with the work that we are going to be doing and to

make sure importantly that all voices are heard, that all

perspectives and viewpoints are considered.

As I've stated in the past, I believe that Massachusetts is at an important crossroads when it comes to our criminal justice system, and I believe now is the time to make smart reforms to our criminal justice system that will improve public safety, improve outcomes, and make the system fairer for all.

The Sentencing Commission is essential to that goal, and I believe can be and will be a constructive force in making this happen.

For the past year, the Commission has been working hard, gathering facts, hearing from experts, inquiring of experts,

and studying sentencing machines across the country.

Grounded in evidence and driven by data, the Commission hopes to generate sensible criminal justice reforms that take into account the views and the values of all the system's stakeholders, including especially all of you here today, members of the general public. And we want to make sure we do so at all times in the way that is fair and that is transparent.

I appreciate, as I said, the fact that members of the public come forward and are willing to share their perspectives and their viewpoints.

In addition to studying the numbers and data, it is the stories and the real world stories that are so important, understanding the, the workings of our criminal justice system and the impact it is having and the effect it is having.

So thank you for taking that time today.

Today of course is not the end of the conversation, but only the beginning.

This first public hearing is simply another step in a much needed dialogue about any number of things, building trust, building greater trust between law enforcement and the community served, dialogue about the judicial system and what is working, what isn't working, and what impact it is having.

And I have to say that while this is a Sentencing

Commission focused on a particular aspect and effort, this is

happening in the context of, of much large conversations about criminal justice reform including some of the systemic issues and some of the, the factors that are, are determinant in, in what actually evolves through our criminal justice system.

And I think, as I said at the outset, it's a really important conversation that we're having.

This Commission is looking closely at all aspects of the criminal justice system with recommendations to the legislature provided on an ongoing and continual basis as circumstances and inclination demand.

And while public safety will not be compromised, it is critical we look at what's fair, what works, importantly what doesn't work, and what is right.

So the work of the Commission proceeds today with this public hearing, and I know that Members will be listening closely to everyone's testimony and their thoughts, comments, and their concerns as we all work together, as I believe we must, towards improving our criminal justice system and making it a model for others to emulate.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to participate on the Commission, but also the opportunity to, to be here this morning. I look forward to the testimony.

JUDGE LU: Thank you so much, Attorney General Maura Healy.

All right. So have a sign up list in front of me, so we're going to first call Darrin Howell from the Jobs Not Jail, I

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hope I'll get this acronym correctly, Service Employees
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       International Union. I hope it, I have that right, Local 1199.
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         So I don't know if Darrin Howell is here.
         COURT OFFICER: The two others, he's not here yet. The two
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       others.
         JUDGE LU: Okay. I'm, you know, I'm misreading the list I
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 7
       think. So that's a group panel. So we're going to hold that
 8
       panel because it appears they're not quite ready.
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         And so we're going to call Beverly Williams of GBIO. I'm
10
       afraid I don't know what that stands for, but I'm going to ask
       Ms. Williams to tell us what that stands for.
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: You're the Greater Boston Interfaith
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       Organization, right?
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         MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Welcome.
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         MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: That's why Judge Heffernan is the Vice Chair --
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Exactly.
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         JUDGE LU: -- of this Commission. (Inaudible at 08:48:07,
20
       low audio.)
21
         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Not true.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. So I'm going to ask you to please, or
23
       maybe also with Ms. Williams is Keaton Heckman, is that right?
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         MR. HECKMAN: Yes, sir.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. I'm going to ask you to please
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- 1 introduce yourself. Basically, the, we have what amounts to a, a Court Reporter System. And they're going to, they'll 2 3 transcribe your remarks based on your voice and your stating your name now. 4 5 Please introduce yourself. MS. WILLIAMS: I'm Beverly Williams. 6 7 MR. HECKMAN: Keaton Heckman.
- JUDGE LU: And I'm afraid I'm asked to do the kind of, maybe 8 9 kind of boring thing of asking you to please spell your name 10 as well.
- 11 MS. WILLIAMS: It's B like in boy, E-V like in victory, E-R-12 L-Y, W-I-L-I-A-M-S.
- MR. HECKMAN: Keaton, K-E-A-T-O-N, Heckman, H-E-C-K-M-A-N. 13
- 14 JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you so much.
- 15 So why don't you talk to us --
- 16 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

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- JUDGE LU: -- and tell us what you think we need to know. 17
- MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Well, first off, I would like to thank 18 19 the Commission for having this public hearing and for the work 20 the Commission has done in providing sentences stated to the Commonwealth. 21
- And I hope that this transparency on both our parts will help us come to really reforming some things around 24 sentencing.
- 25 Again, my name is Beverly Cox Williams. I am a resident of

1 Boston. I am a recently retired Boston Public School teacher.

I'm a member of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in

Jamaica Plain. And I'm a citywide grassroots organizer with

the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, better known as

5 GBIO, so that's what GBIO stands for.

We are actually a faith based organization that is composed of fifty plus interfaith organizations, and our main purpose is to work towards equalizing justice across the Commonwealth.

Many people know GBIO for our successful advocacy and leadership work with getting affordable healthcare for uninsured Massachusetts residents back in 2005, and when in 2002 GBIO successfully secured follow-up legislation that tackled rising cost of healthcare, making Massachusetts the first state to put a stake in the ground around healthcare cost containment.

But that is not what we are all about.

As a faith based organization, GBIO supports policies that add value to life and communities. So subsequently, our moral compass has pointed us in the direction of our criminal justice system.

In March of 2015, our delegation added criminal justice reform as one of our priorities for the next couple of years.

What motivated us to begin advocating for criminal justice reform was what motivated our founding Members back in 1960, 1996, a common desire to transform the historic divisions that

exist, particularly around race and class issues, plus a growing concern over the counterproductive laws and policies that entangle people into a circle or pipeline to jails and prisons.

From arrest through reentry, people are getting stuck in our correctional system at a very high societal and tax cost.

This is why we are not, this, sorry.

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This is why we are not only supporting repealing mandatory minimums, but also pretrial bail reform and eliminating collateral sanctions imposed by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

The collective voices of our delegation was evident on May 12th when over 1700 GBIO people gathered at Trinity Church for a social action agenda moving on our elected officials including the governor, the mayor, the attorney general, and the speaker of the house, Speaker Dileo.

We wanted them to do something about the ineffective sentencing policies.

This led to the speaker committing publically to doing a Pew Study of our criminal justice system.

The proposal was submitted and signed in June of 2015, and the study is underway.

Legislators need technical support to inform the system, and it is our hope that we together will all be a part of that support.

We know that a mandatory minimum for drug sentences is a contributor to the mass incarceration of people of color, the poor, and the disenfranchised.

A criminal justice system that targets certain populations of people are questionable and it undermines the faith and trust we should have in the institutions that are, that are supposed to impart fairness and sustain democracy.

We need to put the justice back in criminal justice.

We can move towards criminal justice when we allow our Judges to use discretion when sentencing an individual on a drug crime as opposed to the one size fits all.

Accepting that we want to see criminals punished for what they do, we want to repeal predetermined sentences that ignore a person's right to have their sentence determined on the particulars of their case.

Data driven evidence, as you mentioned earlier, should be a part of sentencing and our infrastructure should not inherently, should not inherently create racial and class bias.

Since May 12, more than 30 institutions of our, have mobilized and organized hundreds of call and even have done some State House visits to legislatures and our elected official, officials to support the elimination of mandatory minimum sentences of drug offenses.

We hope to see greater collaboration between the Mass

Sentence Commission, the legislature, and the people to make this happen.

Today, Keaton Heckman, an affiliate of GBIO came with me and will share with you his story and experience with mandatory minimum sentences around his drug case.

JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Ms. Williams.

Mr. Heckman, whenever you're ready.

MS. HECKMAN: Thank you.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Keaton Heckman, and I'm a recovering heroin addict. I'm currently eight months clean and in a residential program in Charlestown Recovery.

I asked to be placed in treatment in 2011 when I was arrested and arraigned on a non, non-nonviolent drug case.

Instead of receiving help on my journey to recovery, I was sentenced to two years in jail.

During my hearing shortly after receiving these charges, a scare tactic was used by a District Attorney to have me plead guilty in District Court by threatening that if I did not take this plea, I would be indicted and face a mandatory minimum sentence of three years in State Prison.

For the short amount of time I was given to make the decision in the courthouse that day, I remember watching my family cry while it seemed the whole world was on standstill waiting for my decision.

Inside, I was lonely and afraid, thinking about going back to the correctional facility for those two years. I really thought I had a case, but I did not want to risk getting even more time in prison, so I stood up straight and pled guilty.

After serving this time, I was released with no shelter, job, food, or transportation, putting me in a situation that I felt I had to reoffend to get by.

A month after my release, I was sentenced to another six months and once again released to the same conditions, continuing this vicious cycle.

Please ask yourselves, if this was your son or daughter, would you want them to be given the opportunity to receive treatment or faced with a mandatory minimum sentence that could dramatically change the outcome of their future?

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Heckman.

Now, I'm going to, I wonder if Members of the Commission have questions for Ms. Williams or Mr. Heckman?

Go ahead, Mr. Rosenthal.

MR. ROSENTHAL: I'm actually not going to ask a question. I just want to really welcome the GBIO to this entire issue. Some of you know I've been involved in this stuff for almost four decades, and I went to the United Trinity Church, and it was quite exciting to me.

So I am very happy you're here.

1 MS. HEALY: Keaton, I just want to thank you for coming 2 forward and telling your story. I've been, I've been down to 3 the home in Charleston and sat with, you know, some of your colleagues, and I learned more in those conversations than 4 5 just about anything else. So again, thank you for your offer to come forward and talk 6 7 about, talk about your perspective and what's happening here. MR. HECKMAN: Thank you. 8 9 MS. HEALY: And keep up the great work. 10 MR. HECKMAN: I appreciate it. 11 MS. HEALY: I know how important housing is to you guys and 12 providing support. We've got to do that if we want to see 13 people succeed. 14 MR. HECKMAN: Thank you. 15 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. 16 JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Ms. Williams and Mr. Heckman. 17 18 Mr. Riley, thank you. Have a good day. 19 All right. So I'm going to call, I'm reading the 20 handwriting here, I hope I'm doing it right, Marcy Valerio, Marcy Valerio. Is Marcy Valerio here? 21 22 MS. VALERIO: Mary.

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25

JUDGE LU: Okay.

MS. VALERIO: Yeah.

JUDGE LU: Good morning.

1 MS. VALERIO: Good morning.

JUDGE LU: Please have a seat, make yourself comfortable, and please tell us your name and please spell your name basically for the Court Reporter.

MS. VALERIO: Yes. My name is Mary Valerio. That's M-A-R-Y, V-A-L-E-R-I-O.

JUDGE LU: I apologize for misstating your name.

MS. VALERIO: That's all right.

And I am here today to speak somewhat as a private citizen about my involvement with now being an advocate to promote criminal justice reform.

I'm here to speak today about not only lowering the mandatory minimums on drug sentences, but also to lower some of the maximum sentences.

As the young man had spoken earlier, I am a witness in a case that the defendant is not guilty, and we are five years into trying to resolve the situation.

I have done over one thousand visits in five years to MCI Concord and have met many, many, many family members of incarcerated individuals, and it's pretty obvious that the incarcerated population today weighs very heavily on the communities of color and the communities with fewer economic resources.

As one young woman said to me in one of my initial visits, my boyfriend was arrested. He's facing a charge. We don't have

the money for a private lawyer, a private investigator, all the things that we're going to need, and the District Attorney doesn't like him, so he's going to take a plea even though he's not guilty because once you're arrested and you're in the system, even if he gets convicted and files an appeal, it, he'll still serve three to four to five years in prison either way.

Now, I'm shocked as a taxpayer that someone's going to plead guilty and go to prison, but now that I'm five years into trying to resolve to get a defendant out who is not guilty, I can understand where she's coming from.

I really think that there should be more emphasis on lowering some of the extremely high maximum sentences that involve crimes that are not murders because clearly they are used as weapons, if you will, to pressure people to take a plea or to threaten people to plea bargain out and go to prison when in fact some of them are actually innocent.

In speaking to a lot of family members, most of them will admit that the person perhaps is guilty but there is a group of possibly four to ten percent of inmates who truly are innocent, and I really feel that some type of innocence commission or something should be set up to help them further.

I've written a written testimony that I would really like all of you to just take a minute to read as you will see clearly what I'm talking about about this particular situation

that I found myself in.

And I would just conclude to say that when you're setting a sentence for someone, you really need to consider that you're sending an entire family to prison, the wives, the husbands, the children, the cousins, the aunts, the uncles, the friends, the coworkers, and how this affects them emotionally, financially. And even to survive this for five years is bad enough. Ten years, you almost lose touch with the individuals.

But once you get up above 15 year sentences, you've almost buried someone who is going to have a very difficult time ever readjusting to any kind of normalcy.

So I would just say once again to please read the small written testimony that I had and to consider that these are human beings who are coming before the Court who have families and that they deserve to be treated as part of the human race that we all are a part of.

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you. Ms. Valerio.

Are there questions from Members of the Commission?

All right. Thank you so much.

MS. VALERIO: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Have a good day, Ms. Valerio.

MS. VALERIO: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Okay. At this time, I'm going to call District Attorneys Blodgett, Gulluni, and Capeless. I believe they're

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       ready now.
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         If this a bad time, we can hold off, but if this is a good
 3
       time, we're ready for you.
         Welcome. Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable.
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         MR. GULLUNI: Thank you.
         JUDGE LU: I'm going to ask you, good morning.
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         MR. GULLUNI: Good morning.
         JUDGE LU: I'm going to ask you to please introduce
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 9
       yourselves just so the Court Reporter can get it down because
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       they're going to make a transcript of your remarks today.
11
         We do appreciate your willingness to come before the
12
       Sentencing Commission and to give us your perspective.
         MR. GULLUNI: Thank you. Good morning. My name is Anthony
13
       Gulluni.
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         JUDGE LU: Good morning.
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         MR. GULLUNI: My last name is spelled G-U-L-L-U-N-I.
17
         MR. CAPELESS: I'm Berkshire District Attorney David
18
       Capeless.
         MR. BLODGETT: I'm Essex County District Attorney Jonathan
19
20
       Blodgett.
         JUDGE LU: Okay. All right. Thank you so much.
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         So we'll start with whoever wishes to go forward.
23
         Probably if I mention who's the Senior DA, that wouldn't be
24
       a good thing --
25
         MR. GULLUNI: No.
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JUDGE LU: -- or they, we don't want that pointed out.

MR. GULLUNI: I would not be speaking, Judge.

Good morning again to the Members of the Commission and to you Justice Lu.

I'm pleased to be here and have a chance to address you and speak on behalf of the Massachusetts District Attorney's Association and myself as the Hampden County District Attorney.

I'm, I'm proud again to be here.

Several months ago, you might remember my colleague Suffolk District Attorney Dan Conley informally spoke to you about why he, he and other District Attorneys believe that eliminating mandatory minimum, sentences for drug traffickers is a mistake.

DA Conley has spoken publically before the legislature and in other forums on this issue. He's pointed out that the off repeated claims that Massachusetts has a problem with mass incarceration and that low level nonviolent drug offenders are overflowing our jails are both categorically false assertions.

He's discussed how modern prosecution effectively stakes out the ground where violence and narcotics intersect, using mandatory minimum sentences with precision, precision and circumspection.

He also showed how prosecutors use their discretion to reserve incarceration for the most violent, violent and

recidivist individuals.

Importantly, each of these points is supported by facts and by data and has become better and more widely understood.

So considering those comments, and the progression of the narrative, I wish to speak to you about those points that have been maybe not so well discussed and where the narrative seems to be presently.

First, I'd like to point out the notion that there will be a substantial savings and reinvestment from eliminating mandatory minimum sentences is an empty promise.

The rate of incarceration in Massachusetts has been falling for years, yet there was not been a corresponding savings or reinvestment.

Because those actually serving mandatory sentences are relatively small in number compared to the overall population, any changes to these laws indeed will not result in any appreciable savings or related reinvestment.

Second, and I think most important, is the real problem in Massachusetts we presently face is not in fact mass incarceration or harsh treatment of drug dealers, but recidivism and its driving forces.

The facts are clear. Incarceration is most often the result of violent behavior and substantial recidivation.

The practices in Massachusetts are and have long been to resort to incarceration in only few circumstances, most often

when violence, recidivism, or high level crime is at play.

My belief and the belief of many of my colleagues is that the releasing of violent and highly recidivistic offenders back into our communities or making it more difficult to send them there when public safety demands it does not solve criminal justice problems.

In fact, it allows for violence to persist in our neighborhoods and cities and serves to allow for drugs and those who profit from them to be more prevalent.

So I would respectfully urge this Committee when considering the idea of criminal justice reform to do so in the broadest possible context.

While the criminal justice system ex, is expansive and prosecutors, sheriffs, and prisons are just a few aspects of it, the system frequently becomes a repository and last resort for the failures of other systems.

Changing the outcomes of the criminal justice system as is being discussed does not equate to the solving of underlying and foundational problems which include disparities in educational attainment, employment, health and housing, and more that all lead to crime and incarceration.

Substantially reducing, reducing systemic crime and social problems will only come with core and fundamental change, and we understand that.

While always mindful of the need for larger change, law

makers and prosecutors alike must continue to place a premium on public safety through the smart fair enactment and enforcement of laws.

However, the good news is that there are steps we can take immediately to help people avoid crime and reduce recidivism, and this Commonwealth's District Attorneys are already committed and significant partners in this work.

Specifically I mean every District Attorney including myself and those here in Massachusetts support and employ diversion programs in one form or another.

Many of us support and participate in specialty or problem solving courts, including those aimed at drug addiction, veterans, the homeless, and those challenged with mental illnesses.

We work with sheriffs and nonprofit groups on programs aimed at the successful reentry of people exiting jails.

When warranted, we use our discretion to dismiss and civilly divert significant numbers of cases and also encourage and direct defendants into treatment when addiction or mental health issues are present.

We aim to give many defendants, those who are young, those who have limited criminal histories, and those dealing with substance abuse and mental health issues, among others, opportunities to rehabilitate and ultimately avoid recidivation and incarceration.

Most often, quite candidly, we oversee systems in which incarceration is not the goal. It is in fact the last resort.

District Attorneys here use their discretion to afford assistance and treatment judiciously as we do our discretion to seek incarceration.

In all cases, the common denominator is justice and public safety.

We think these approaches make sense.

Not every District Attorney operates exactly the same way, but each DA is dually elected responsive to the specific needs of the communities he or she serves and accountable to those who elected us.

Proof of this success and wisdom of the approach I've described resides in the simple fact that Massachusetts has enjoyed declining prison populations for many years along with declining crime rates.

It shows we are targeting the right people. This includes high level and incorrigible drug dealers, and frankly the link between drugs and violence cannot be ignored or wished away.

It is real. To attempt to dismiss or diminish, or diminish this reality or to reduce a drug trafficker's responsibility for the chaos, the crime, the addiction, and the violence he creates and profits from is dangerous and is a terrible disservice to the victims of violent crime and to the communities we're all elected to serve.

But still, we believe that there are other things that we can do to further enhance public safety by reducing recidivism.

Back in 2012, the Commonwealth's District Attorneys voluntary sat at the table with legislators and made significant concessions in an effort to reach compromise and set a forward thinking path.

These agreements made real changes to the mandatory minimum drug laws, including, including raising triggering drug weights and reducing the length of sentences as well as markedly reducing the distance for school zone penalties.

At this time, the DA's has also proposed adding on postrelease supervision.

This important part of what my colleagues were proposing at the time did not go forward.

As we sit here today, the current debate around mandatory minimums has produced little agreement or consensus unfortunately.

But the idea of post-release supervision is an idea that now enjoys broad support.

Including the continuing support of the District Attorneys,
Chief Justice Ralph Gants, and Laura Swats of the defense bar
and academic community.

In this same view, we believe it is important to evaluate the effect, the effect and impact of those 2012 changes.

Despite the DA's good faith cooperation in this effort, we regretfully find ourselves operating in an environment in which the opiate epidemic is worse than ever.

Now, there are calls to eliminate mandatory minimums altogether.

According to the Department of Public Health, the number of opiate related overdose deaths have risen from 668 in 2012 to 1,256 in 2014.

In the first six months of this year, there have already been 684 overdose deaths, putting us on pace to exceed last year's total and again more than double the 2012 figure.

I can tell you back in my county in the Springfield area just over the weekend, we had over 30 overdoses, including about eight deaths as a result of obviously some sort of infect, infected strain of heroin.

It, it's an awful situation I think everywhere in this Commonwealth.

So I ask you, how does eliminating, eliminating mandatory minimum sentences for drug, drug traffickers help to slow this epidemic?

How does it help to pretend and then treat drug dealers as anything less than what they are, people who profit from addiction and drive much of the violence that plagues our communities?

As prosecutors, we want to continue to work with this

Commission and with all policy makers to put in place laws, policies and programs that work.

We believe that post-release supervision is one of those policies that should be adopted and would represent a significant step forward.

We think doing this in conjunction with the proper investment of programs like reentry, drug treatment, and job training, those initiatives that give people the structure and the support they need when they leave prison and re-enter our communities, is what sets people up to effectively reassimilate and succeed.

That is not a quick and easy fix, but in our view, with a continued focus on underlying issues like addiction, education, and economic opportunity, we can drive down recidivism and promote public safety.

Ultimately, this is how we can transform lives and transform communities.

Let me be clear. This is not to, to deny the high rates of incarceration that we see in states like Mississippi or Louisiana, states whose in, whose incarceration rates are triple and quadruple that of Massachusetts.

In fact, our rate of incarceration poignantly is half the U.S. average.

But with all due respect to members of this committee, we are not going to solve a problem in Louisiana or elsewhere by

eliminating a valuable sentencing and public safety tool here in Massachusetts.

What we can do here at home to make an immediate and noteworthy impact on recidivism, recidivism rates is to implement the kind of post relief supervision that gives recently released inmates an incentive to stay out of trouble and a chance to succeed after paying their debt to society.

On behalf of the Commonwealth's District Attorneys, I would ask that you add this valuable tool to the criminal justice system's toolbox, rather than take a very effective one away.

I am appreciative of the chance to speak before you and I am happy to be a point of contact for you and a resource going forward if so desired.

I am, I and other present District Attorneys are happy to take any questions that you now have.

Thank you very much.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, District Attorney Gulluni.

So we are happy to welcome District Attorney Michael O'Keefe.

So we have high tech Court Reporters today, and they're asking me to get a voice exemplar from each speaker, so District Attorney O'Keefe, if you could just tell us your name, please, or anything else you want to tell us.

MR. O'KEEFE: Testing one, two, three.

District Attorney Michael O'Keefe from the Cape and

1 Islands, Your Honor. 2 JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. So unless there are other comments, they'll, I'll ask the 3 Commission whether you have any questions for the speakers. 4 5 JUDGE HEFFERNAN: May I just make a comment and say thank you very much for the remarks, and also, in a previous life, 6 before I was a Judge, I was involved in that 2012 effort 7 around sentencing and am grateful for your leadership as a 8 9 group around that and always am grateful for what you do 10 around criminal justice and it, and your willingness to sit 11 down and discuss things is, is appreciated very much. 12 So I know we look forward to further discussions as we try to craft what it is we're looking to do. And thank you very 13 14 much for your remarks. 15 I've never met you but welcome. 16 MR. GULLUNI: Thank you, Judge. JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Thank you. 17 JUDGE LU: Mr. Rosenthal? 18 19 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes. Thank you. 20 I, I'm curious especially about, Mr. Gulluni, is that how 21 you pronounce it? I'm sorry. MR. GULLUNI: It's Gulluni. 22 MR. ROSENTHAL: Gulluni. Gulluni. Sorry. The comment that 23

you made about incarceration is a last resort, and I was quite

intrigued when Dan Conley for the MDAA responded to Judge

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Gants and said we should be looking at the, Massachusetts being lower than other states and Texas and so forth.

And I'm curious what you think about the comparison between Massachusetts and the rest of the world and the United States and the rest of the world and that our incarceration rate is off the charts for the rest of the world, and how that is consistent or inconsistent with what you say about incarceration as a last resort.

Judge Gants in his testimony a few months ago presented the statistics from the '70s when we had 62 people per 100,000, and now we have 300, over 300 for 100,000 incarcerated.

So how does that square with incarceration as a last resort is my question.

MR. GULLUNI: Well, I, I can't speak to, to global comparisons, and quite frankly, I'm not concerned about them.

The situation here in the United States is unique in the fact that guns are ubiquitous. There are social problems that other countries don't face.

I think the comparisons are most aptly put between different states and what we do.

I'm proud to say as a new District Attorney and as a former Assistant District Attorney I think we are a leader here in Massachusetts on criminal justice policy and law enforcement.

I can speak to the, to the situation in my county having

Sheriff Michael Ashe for forty plus years who's been a pioneer

in law enforcement, not only in incarceration, in reentry. I think we're uniquely situated there as well.

But I think the DAs, knowing them, knowing their policies, having worked in the system, in fact incarceration is, is often a last resort.

Our first priority is always public safety, protecting people, and, you know, justifying what, what victims of crime go through. But we often look to rehabilitate in most cases first, second, and third when people come into our Court System.

So I would, I am proud to say I think we're a leader nationally in criminal justice and how we conduct ourselves as District Attorney's.

MR. O'KEEFE: Could I, could I address that also, Mr.

Rosenthal?

MR. ROSENTHAL: With leave of the Chair.

JUDGE LU: Absolutely.

18 MR. O'KEEFE: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Mr. O'Keefe.

MR. O'KEEFE: With respect to the, to the global comparison that you suggested, you know, there are places in the world that certainly don't have the incarceration rates. Their penalties for certain activities are much more Draconian than incarceration.

For example, they kill people. They cut off the hands of

people who deal with drugs for example in certain parts of the world.

One of the things that I found very interesting as we began this debate several years ago, and we were listening to this myth, in our judgment, that we were warehousing these nonviolent drug offenders. We undertook, and I, I hope this hasn't already been put before you this morning, but an examination of the Board of Probation checks of every single individual who was incarcerated in the DOC and the year that that was undertaken was the end of '13, and at that time, there were 1,452 defendants incarcerated at the DOC out of a population of roughly 10,500 or so.

And having in mind we're 48^{th} in the nation with respect to that.

But those 1,452 individuals represented 58,600 arraignments.

So I would respectfully suggest that that was a very telling statistic that incarceration is in Massachusetts a last resort.

That's an average number of arraignments of more than 40 for each of those 1,452 individuals.

And, again, I'd suggest we do it very responsibly here in Massachusetts.

That demonstrates, in my humble judgment, that it is indeed the last resort.

1 | JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Mr. O'Keefe.

So we've been joined by District Attorney Timothy Cruz. If you could just say your name and anything else you want to say.

The Court Reporters are requiring me to have everyone say their name so that it's on the tape.

MR. CRUZ: My name is Timothy Cruz, C-R-U-Z, and I am the District Attorney from Plymouth County, and I rely on the testimony of my brothers who I believe have already testified before you.

I apologize for being late.

JUDGE LU: No problem. Thank you and welcome.

Other questions from the Sentencing Commission?

MR. REDDEN: Mr. Chair?

15 JUDGE LU: John Redden.

MR. REDDEN: Good morning.

17 MR. GULLUNI: Good morning.

18 MR. O'KEEFE: Good morning.

MR. REDDEN: I, I listened with some interest to your, your touching upon the issue of prosecutorial discretion in the application of the mandatory minimum sentences, and I think I can tell you not only as a defense attorney but as a former prosecutor in another jurisdiction, I, I think the exercise of, of discretion in these areas is one of the most important things that a prosecutor can do, and it's a very significant

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But in the area of mandatory minimums, there tends to be often a direct correlation between how that discretion is exercised and what a sentence is going to be.

And when you have a number of different District Attorneys exercising that discretion, human nature being what it is, you're going to have the discretion exercised differently depending upon what jurisdiction a defendant is being prosecuted in.

And you did touch a little bit on this in, in your comments when you noted that not every, every District Attorney --

12 JUDGE LU: So sorry,

MR. REDDEN: -- acts in the same --

14 JUDGE LU: -- Mr. Redden.

15 Mr. Riley, we need another chair for Mr. Early.

So sorry. Go ahead.

17 MR. REDDEN: Okay.

18 JUDGE LU: Sorry for the interruption.

19 MR. REDDEN: You touched a little bit about that --

JUDGE LU: And we need a chair for Mr. Conley as well.

MR. REDDEN: -- when, when you talked about the idea that not every District Attorney acts in the same way.

So that long sort of introduction leads me to this question to you, is that in there any concern either on, on your part or on the part of your fellow District Attorneys about disparity and different treatment of different individuals in, in the imposition of mandatory minimums just because they happened to be prosecuted in a different county?

MR. GULLUNI: With all due respect, that's sort of a softball because the District Attorneys apply the laws as, as they're written, and often the discretion is used in the interest of an offender's background or some sort of, of compassion or something about the case.

But there are eleven District Attorneys in the Commonwealth.

There are hundreds of just Superior Court Judges in my understanding or hundreds of Judges in the District and Superior Courts who all would apply their unique experiences, their discretion as it were, to each case if there were no mandatory minimums.

You know, in, in the examples I use, I have a district in which there are some urban depressed environments and there are some more well to do environments.

I think with mandatory minimums as they're often applied, especially in, in regard to drug cases and trafficking cases where it's based on weight, if, if you're someone from Long Meadow or if you're someone from inner city Springfield, the laws are going to apply equally.

And in front of whichever Judge you find yourself, the laws are going to apply equally.

So the system is not perfect. Each District Attorney probably applies his or her experience and, and how the office runs is somewhat different, but there is consistency. And I think the consistency is far greater than it is with each Judge taking a different approach and rendering a different decision if there were no mandatory minimums to make things somewhat consistent.

MR. REDDEN: So I guess the, the, the bottom line is that that, that's not an issue of concern for you at this point?

MR. GULLUNI: Absolutely not.

MR. REDDEN: All right.

We've heard some people say here today, I don't, I don't know how long you've been here, but, and I've heard in other context of people expressing concern that mandatory minimums can be used to essentially coerce guilty pleas where a defendant for example in District Court is offered the opportunity to enter a guilty plea in District Court with the admonition that if they do not accept the plea offer in District Court, they will be prosecuted on the Superior Court level and we, will, will be subjected to a much greater mandatory minimum sentence.

And the suggestion was made that that, that can have an unduly coercive effect on somebody relinquishing all the rights associated with a criminal case before pleading guilty.

Is that something that, that's been on your radar screen or

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your fellow District Attorneys as a concern?
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         JUDGE LU: So sorry.
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         But could I ask District Attorney Joseph Early and Daniel
       Conley just to say your names for the stenographer.
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         I'm be, taking my instructions from them to require every
       speaker to do that.
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         MR. EARLY: Yes, yes, Your Honor.
         JUDGE LU: Get used to it.
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         MR. EARLY: Joseph Early, and I represent the middle
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       district, also known as Worcester County.
         MR. CONLEY: Daniel Conley, Suffolk County District
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       Attorney.
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         JUDGE LU: Thank you. Good morning and welcome.
         MR. CONLEY: Good morning.
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         JUDGE LU: So I think that, there was a question that --
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         MR. BLODGETT: I'd like to answer that question --
         JUDGE LU: All right.
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         MR. BLODGETT: -- if I can.
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         In the first part is to your earlier inquiry about eleven
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       different District Attorneys and the beauty of our system is
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       that if a District Attorney is being heavy handed is being
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       unfair, is being outrageous in his or her recommendations,
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       then the public is going to know about that very quickly by a
       combination of Judges, defense bar, and the press, and you
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       will have to stand in front of the public and be voted either
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1 in or out.

So unlike other entities who are being asked to have that discretion, we have to answer to, to, to the public.

So if somebody is being unfair, that will get out very quickly.

And in terms of your second question, with respect to using mandatory minimums to bludgeon somebody into a, I think that's a bunch of nonsense frankly. And I would love to have a list of those cases that people love to talk to in the abstract, take a look at that because I've been doing this job for, for 13 years, and if somebody thought that my office was being unfair or heavy handed or using mandatory minimums as a bludgeon, I would find out pretty quickly about it, and we would address it.

I don't think that's true.

Frankly, if it was, I'm sure we'd hear about specific cases and specific defendants, and that's yet to happen in my time as District Attorney.

And we do use discretion wisely.

I've had a Diversion Program since 2007 which I'm very proud about. It's robust. It's fair. It's given people second chances, often pre-complaint, pre-complaint before they go to the criminal justice system.

The system as it, it sits right now is working very well.

MR. GULLUNI: If --

1 MR. REDDEN: Well --MR. GULLUNI: -- if I can make a further comment --2 MR. REDDEN: Okay. 3 MR. CONLEY: Your Honor --4 5 JUDGE LU: Surely. MR. CONLEY: So I, I just reflect on my own experience as 6 the Suffolk County District Attorney, I think about how many 7 8 defendants, how many defendants in the last, well, when this 9 debate really began in earnest in the beginning of 2014, we began to examine '13, 2013 and 2012. 10 11 So in Suffolk County if someone's charged with distribution of a class B substance, it is almost always within a school 12 zone, certainly within a school zone of 1000 feet. 13 And in our office, we looked at those cases which could 14 15 have, we could have enforced without, at our, at our own 16 discretion, our own call, two year mandatory minimum sentence 17 in the House of Correction. And we looked at it, and I'm not sure if it was '12 or '13, 18 19 2012 or 2013, there were fewer than 75 cases in the District 20 Court where we enforced a two year mandatory minimum in a school zone. 21 22 Meaning that a defendant typically who came to us, Mr. 23 Redden, we didn't put the squeeze on the defendant to plead

The defendant came to us and says I'd be willing to plead

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guilty.

guilty. Will you drop the school zone and give me probation or some sort of treatment?

And in the vast majority of cases, that's what happened.

So when, you know, prosecutors are characterized as leaning on people to plead guilty, in my experience both as a trial prosecutor and as District Attorney, when a defendant comes to us and offers to plead guilty, offers to make an admission to sufficient facts, I credit that. I like it when people accept ownership of what they did.

And the benefit that they get from that is a reduced sentence.

I never, in my personal practice, and I don't expect it from any of the Assistant DAs who work for me, pull out a sledgehammer and put it over someone's head and say if you don't plead guilty you're going to suffer much more severe consequences.

MR. REDDEN: I, I can only tell you that, that it hasn't happened to me a lot, but I, I have represented clients facing mandatory sentences, whether it's through the drug statutes or as an habitual criminal or the like when I've been approached and I've been told by a prosecutor that we will back off the habitual, we will back off the mandatory minimum if your client pleads guilty to X amount of time.

And I would think probably in my experience, most other defense attorneys have experienced that from time to time.

1 So --MR. CONLEY: Well --2 3 MR. REDDEN: -- we just have a dis, disagreement as to what happens on a daily basis. 4 5 MR. GULLUNI: Well, two things. One, if, if that is going to have any effect, it's because 6 there is the evidence and the facts in the case that would 7 8 warrant a, a guilty plea in it. 9 But more importantly, the legislation sets the standard for 10 sentencing. 11 If there is going to be discretion that is shown by any District Attorney, it's towards leniency. 12 13 So if there's a difference in discretion, it's a difference in the degree of leniency that's being shown by District 14 15 Attorneys, not in heavy handedness. 16 MR. REDDEN: Okay. 17 JUDGE LU: Mr. Rosenthal? MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes. 18 19 One very brief comment and one other question. 20 I've only once gotten to cross-examine a prosecutor in my 21 40 years, and I'm not going to abuse it today. But the, the comment is, is as to the net, the post release 22 23 supervision. I, I don't know anybody that's against that, but the issue 24 25 for that is net marketing and whether it puts more people into incarceration.

But let me move to my question which is on the, on the mandatory minimums, and we have the pleasure of having Mr.

Conley come in as a guest, and we talked to him which we were quite pleased to do.

The question is whether any of you have looked at the '96 report by the Sentencing Commission, I'm happy to see

Frank Carney in the audience, one of the Members, and the approach that they took to mandatory minimums in that instance, just for drug cases, an exceptional departure process to depart from the low mandatory minimums which I believe is consistent with Chapter 211E in our mandate, and whether or not any of you have thought about that as an alternative to mandatory minimums and are you open to it as a different approach that gives the Judge discretion but subject to checks and balances and appeals?

JUDGE LU: I'm going to, just from the body language of the audience, I'm going to ask folks to get right on top of those microphones.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay. Well --

JUDGE LU: All right.

MR. ROSENTHAL: -- that's the end, so next time.

JUDGE LU: All right. District Attorney O'Keefe.

MR. O'KEEFE: You know, over, over the years, we've looked at many different formulations of changes in sentencing

structure.

And, and that one strikes me as one which would very quickly have the exceptions follow the rule.

When we went to the legislature in '12 and offered the reduction in the triggering weight and the reduction in the sentencing in exchange for that, we expected, we expected that the other half of that which was post-release supervision would take place. It was part of the package.

It of course did not take place.

The only thing that happened was the weights were increased and the sentences were reduced.

In our judgment, that was not wise in terms of helping the recidivism issue.

We have people sentenced every day in the Commonwealth to three and a day or two and a day, and we, they do their time, they get out, they go right back into the same circumstances because there is no supervision, that got them incarcerated in the first place.

We think the most important tool in changing that dynamic is some real post-release supervision, that what we're all interested in is reducing recidivism.

You know, the criminal justice system gets blamed for a lot of things, but, you know, keep in mind it's an opt in system. It doesn't go out looking for people. People are brought to it because they commit a crime and they have to be dealt with.

And when we were negotiating with the senate back in '12 over those reductions, they were our idea. We brought that to the senate.

And it's not so much the length of time, I don't know who sat around and decided way back when that it should be 20 years for over 200, and to 100 to 150, I don't know who decided that.

The legislature passed that, and that's what we dealt with for a number of years, and we reduced those out of our exercise of discretion, discretion routinely.

What's more important to us is not so much the length of the sentencing, but the certainty of it so that there is a message delivered to those people who, bear in mind, introduced a poison which is now killing legions of people in the Commonwealth. Those are the folks that we're after.

And we need this tool in order to effectively deal with our little piece of this problem, and that is interdiction.

The rest of it, public health issue, education, treatment, and prevention, those things we have to begin to pay more attention to.

And if there's a silver lining in this cloud, it's that I think we are doing that. The legislature's doing it. Certainly the administration, our Attorney General, have both made it priorities to deal with that issue.

But I think we'll be taking respectfully a step back if we

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       eliminate the important tool of the certainty of sentencing
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       for trafficking drugs.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay. I want to thank District Attorneys Joseph
       Early and Michael O'Keefe, David Capeless, Anthony Gulluni,
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       John Blodgett, Timothy Cruz, and Daniel Conley.
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         Have a good day.
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         MR. GULLUNI: Thank you very much, Your Honor.
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         MR. CONLEY: Thank you.
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         MR. O'KEEFE: Thank you.
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         MR. CAPELESS: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: Thanks.
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       (Discussion off the record.)
         JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you, Attorney General Healy.
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         MS. HEALY: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. So we're going to call now, it's
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       actually the, the first people here this morning, but it's a
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       multi-person panel and it's from Jobs Not Jail, Jails, and the
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       spokespersons I believe will be Josh Beardsley, John Bowman,
       and Darrin Howell.
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         I think they're from Jobs Not Jails, Service Employees
       International Union, Local 1199.
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         If, if you're ready now.
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         If, if I'm incorrect and you're not ready, we can hold off.
         MR. BOWMAN: I don't think Darrin's coming.
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JUDGE LU: Okay. All right.

1 Come right up. Have, have a seat and make yourself 2 comfortable, please. 3 Please speak right into the microphone nice and close, and I'm going to ask you to please say your names for the 4 5 stenographer please. MR. BEARDSLEY: My name is Josh, J-O-S-H, Beardsley B-E-A-R-6 D as in David-S-L-E-Y. 7 JUDGE LU: Thank you. 8 9 MR. BEARDSLEY: You're welcome. 10 MR. BOWMAN: And my name is John, J-O-H-N, Bowman, B-O-W-M-11 A-N. JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you for joining us. Thank you so 12 13 much. 14 I will ask you now, whoever wants to go first, to tell us 15 what you believe we need to know. MR. BEARDSLEY: As I said, my name is Josh Beardsley, and 16 17 I'm retired from McKinsey & Companies research arm. And I'm a volunteer with the Jobs Not Jails coalition as 18 19 their research coordinator. 20 And I appreciate the opportunity to be here this morning. And I will limit my remarks to two issues. 21 22 First, the savings that we think can be expected from two reforms in the Justice Reinvestment Act. 23 24 There are only two reforms that are on the table. There are

others of course, but I'm just going to refer to the two that

are in the Justice Reinvestment Act, that's repealing mandatory minimum drug sentences and raising the felony threshold from 250 to 1300 dollars.

And the second issue, and I know it's not under the purview of the Sentencing Commission, but it's the critical importance of the Trust Fund which is part of the Justice Reinvestment Act.

And what would the savings be? Well, we estimated the savings using the concept of marginal cost that was developed by the Vera Institute last summer using data from Hampden County actually, one of two counties in the United States that actually provided the data to the very institute.

And regarding the threshold, only two states in the, in the country have lower thresholds, larceny thresholds, than Massachusetts. That's Virginia and New Jersey.

And in our testimony to the Judiciary Committee, we recommended raising that from the 250 dollars to 1300 dollars basically applying the Consumer Price Index to the 1945 threshold which was 100 dollars. That brings us to 1300 dollars today.

And repealing the drug mandatory minimums and implementing the recommendations in the bill we estimate would result in about 30 million dollars in gross annual savings over a five year period. And that figure does not include the thousands that we understand are sentence for drug offenses who are

converted, coerced to take a plea and result in a longer sentence than otherwise they would have.

And raising the larceny threshold could shrink the prison population further and result in some 6 million dollars in annual savings we estimate.

And that doesn't include a second threshold that we suggested to Senator Brownsburger who challenged us on the basis of why do you think they got it right in 1945.

And that evening we suggested another rationale which he seemed to like which raised the threshold to 3500 dollars which would put us first in the nation, above Wisconsin.

But why is the trust fund so important? And this is the context, I think.

Our prisons and House of Correction release some 16000 individuals every year. Most without supervision and the great majority of whom do not have access to the resources that would allow them to reintegrate into their communities.

And these communities are among the poorest in the Commonwealth according to Harvard University research, Department of Corrections research, and the House of Correction's research in Hampden County which has done the most granular research of all.

And raising the, I'm sorry.

And not only that, but the individuals within these communities are among the most disadvantaged in our, in our

Commonwealth.

They're poor. They're undereducated. And they're unemployed.

75 percent of those who are at intake in the Hampden County House of Correction are unemployed.

Over 50 percent do not have a high school diploma, and most read at a $6^{\rm th}$ grade level.

These are not the drug traffickers of TV fame. These are poor, undereducated, and underemployed individuals.

And the current recidivism rate is 40 to 65 percent depending on the timeframe.

And according to our analysis, and we were pretty conservative, current reforms of any act could affect some 5,000 individuals among the current populations.

So clearly the recidivism rate will only grow if reintegration and unemployment challenges are left for another day.

The investments that need to be made across all stages of the criminal justice system are, have been well understood for some time.

In 2012, the Department of Corrections convened a three day conference of all the stakeholders and produced a remarkably detailed and comprehensive road map to reduce recidivism.

And yet over the past three years, nothing but cuts have we experienced, according to the Governor's Commission on

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Corrections Reform.
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         We ask the Commission to set the precedent, move to begin
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       to dismantle this criminal justice that's broken --
         JUDGE LU: I'm so sorry to interrupt you, I, I just want to
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       welcome --
         MR. BEARDSLEY: Sure.
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         JUDGE LU: -- Secretary of Public Safety Daniel Bennett.
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         You know, we actually, I think we have an extra seat right
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       here so,
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         MR. BENNETT: Thank you very much. I didn't want to --
         JUDGE LU: We'll move your nametag.
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         So sorry, Mr. Beardsley.
         MR. BEARDSLEY: All right.
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         JUDGE LU: Go ahead.
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         MR. BEARDSLEY: Well, I'm almost done.
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         We urge you to recommend the reforms that are here and
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       reduce the footprint of the criminal justice system and urge
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       the legislatures to capture those savings to invest in
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       education, training, community program that could someday make
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       this criminal justice system obsolete.
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         And I've provided some written testimony along with some
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       graphs and charts.
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         And we'd be more than happy to answer any questions.
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         Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Beardsley.
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         As you probably know, the, everyone's testimony and written
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       filings are going to be compiled very quickly, actually we
       expect within 24 hours, and provided to the Commission
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       Members.
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         And I for one, and I'm sure all of the Commission Members
       will be studying it carefully.
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         I'm going to ask, welcome, and I'm going to ask you to
       please tell the, basically the stenographer your name, please.
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         And whoever wants to talk next can talk next.
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         MS. MILHANS: Sure. My name's Elizabeth Milhans, E-L-I-Z-A-
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       B-E-T-H, M-I-L-H-A-N-S, and I'm here to testify on my story
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       that I was sentenced to a mandatory minimum.
         JUDGE LU: Okay.
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         MS. MILHANS: I was --
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         JUDGE LU: So why don't you go next.
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         MS. MILHANS: Sure.
17
         JUDGE LU: Can you rotate that microphone --
         MS. MILHANS: Yes, sir
18
19
         JUDGE LU: -- so you're right on top of it, please?
20
         MS. MILHANS: Okay.
         JUDGE LU: Thank you.
21
22
         MS. MILHANS: All right.
         And --
23
24
         JUDGE LU: And tell us your name one more time.
25
         MS. MILHANS: Elizabeth Milhans.
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1 JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you.

2 MS. MILHANS: Thank you.

May I begin?

JUDGE LU: Yes, please do.

MS. MILHANS: Thank you.

I was living in California, I had moved there, and I was working. I had a really good job. I was renting a house. I had tooken a loan out on a vehicle, and I was living from what I consider a quality life.

I was caught and charged with 3.5 grams of mushrooms, and I was sentenced to a mandatory minimum of sixteen months.

From there, I had been, I couldn't go to my job. I had lost my job, my house, my vehicle.

I was in a state prison where I was, I had no contact with anybody.

I was put through a lot there.

I don't feel that my punishment was fitting to my crime.

During that time when I was paroled, I was paroled to nothing, and it was hard enough to just keep my head afloat, never mind worry about all the things I lost, never mind the credit that I had damaged so bad.

You know, through that it has taken me numerous years to come through that depression, and five years, four years later, I'm sorry, I'm finally able to obtain employment through my hard work.

Having a felony on my record has really been damaging for me, not just for employment but also housing.

So I understand that now it is a low level felony that has been made a misdemeanor due to Prop 47 in California.

And I just, repealing a mandatory minimum would probably face somebody that's a low level drug offender, the hardships that I had to face coming out of prison.

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you very much.

All right. Mr. Bowman, did you want to speak at this time?

MR. BOWMAN: Yes, please.

Thank you, Judge Lu, Members of the Commission. Good morning.

I am here --

JUDGE LU: Good morning.

MR. BOWMAN: -- actually in a duel capacity, first on behalf of my church, the United Parish in Brookline, and also I am a volunteer with the Jobs Not Jails Coalition working under the egis of the Access to Justice Fellows Program established under the Supreme Judicial Court.

My church, like many others, has gotten very active with this area, both in educational and outreach purposes. We have actually gone so far as to adopt a formal resolution after study in opposition to mass incarceration.

We're one of many faith communities, synagogues and

1 churches, involved in this. You've already heard from Greater Boston Interfaith 2 3 Organization this morning. And I suspect you're surprised to learn that you may now be 4 5 the subject of sermons and many, many social justice committee 6 meetings. In the interest of time --7 JUDGE LU: I've been the subject of editorials before, but 8 9 we won't get into that. 10 JUDGE HEFFERNAN: As long as you pray for us --MR. BOWMAN: Right. 11 JUDGE HEFFERNAN: -- if I, if you're doing that. 12 13 MR. BOWMAN: I, I have submitted written testimony that you 14 have. 15 Let me try to condense it to keep our time short. 16 And I'd like to start with what it is that we already know. 17 What we already know at the national level is that over recent decades, the United States has become the major 18 19 warehouser of people. 20 The salient statistic is that the United States, with only 21 five percent of the world's population now has 25 percent of 22 the world's prisoners.

We also see that comparing the United States to the rest of the world, especially Western Europe, the United Kingdom, Germany, we have much longer prison sentences when people go

23

24

to jail.

The other feature that we can see that stands out is that there's a major racial disparity in who gets incarcerated.

We have reached the point that today one out of three young black men can look forward to spending some time in prison.

In my estimation, that is not a good society or a moral society, and equally important, it doesn't have the earmarks of a stable society moving forward.

So what do we know about Massachusetts in comparison?

Well, one thing we do know is, is that, that Massachusetts

does incarcerate at a lower rate than most other states, but

Massachusetts nevertheless has experienced the same explosion

in an increase in incarceration.

You look at the data, you look at the graphs, you see at the national level, you see at the state level this great leap upwards starting in 1973.

Our incarceration rate today is about five times what it was in 1973.

If United, if Massachusetts were a separate nation, we would now rank eighth in the world in incarceration.

In Massachusetts, we see in the same racial disparity. We know that African Americans and Hispanics are disproportionately among those who are in prison.

And this is, this racial disparity seems to be particularly true for people who are receiving mandatory minimum sentences,

especially under our drug laws.

And I want to pause and I want to applaud your predecessor

Commission because it did speak out against mandatory minimums

for drug cases, and I hope that this Commission will reaffirm

and re-voice that.

The evidence has only accumulated that has, this has not been a good policy choice.

So against that backdrop, drop, we have the challenge that this Commission face.

I'm going to condense this from what I said in my written testimony, but if we look backwards, we now have about two decades of experiencing, experience under the sentencing guidelines.

I think the question is to figure out from that experience to what extent the guidelines themselves may contribute to maintaining this high rate of incarceration and look for possible changes.

I think the Commission should also be looking forward. I think it should be thinking about the rate of incarceration that we have reached in Massachusetts and in the nation and be considering whether it has a role and what that role should be in decreasing the rate of incarceration.

It's time to move past where we were and the political battles that got us to this point and, and turn a new page.

I mentioned in my written testimony a number of possible

items for you to consider in this forward look.

Right now, I will, in the interest of brevity, I will mention only three.

The first is to put more emphasis on what your statute, Chapter 211E refers to intermediate sanctions.

That is summon alternatives to incarceration or maybe in sometimes supplements to shorter incarceration.

The second is to take a really hard look at mental illness and at drug and alcohol abuse.

I've heard sheriffs from the state, around the state, say that this is a major problem of the people that they have incarcerated but that they don't feel that these people are in the proper place.

I actually agree with the testimony from the District Attorneys when he said we've allowed our jails, the last resort, to become the first resort.

We should change that. We should be looking at ways to shift from a prison and punishment regime to a public health and treatment regime in these areas.

It will cost less. It should turn out to be more effective if you're thinking about recidivist rates, and it's more humane.

And, finally, I suggest that we should start looking at shorter sentences.

I mean there is a real question of whether or not we really

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think that a four year sentence to prison is twice as good as
 1
 2
       a two year sentence when we can well realize that it disrupts
 3
       family con, ties, community ties, and it may in many cases
       lower the chances for success after release from prison.
 4
 5
         So I urge you to do that.
         And in closing, I simply say you've taken on quite a task.
 6
 7
       I thank you very much for doing this.
 8
         JUDGE LU: Thank you very much, Mr. Bowman.
 9
         So we've had two folks join us. I want to welcome them and
10
       ask you to please tell us your name --
         MR. WADLOW: My name is --
11
12
         JUDGE LU: And, and if you could spell your names for the,
       the stenographer as well.
13
         MR. WADLOW: My name is Wilson Wadlow, W-I-L-S-O-N, W-A-D-L-
14
15
       O-W.
         JUDGE LU: Good morning.
16
         MR. WADLOW: Good morning.
17
         MR. BAPTISTA: Good morning. My name's Valenti Baptista, V-
18
19
       A-L-E-N-T-I, B-A-P-T-I-S-T-A.
20
         JUDGE LU: All right. Good morning to Mr. Wadlow and Mr.
21
       Baptista.
22
         Did, you're welcome to give us some comment or anything
23
       information you think we might benefit by.
         MR. WADLOW: Thank you, sir.
24
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JUDGE LU: Okay.

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1
         MR. BAPTISTA: Thank you.
         JUDGE LU: All right. Did you want to say something?
 2
 3
         MR. BAPTISTA: First?
         MR. WADLOW: Sure.
 4
 5
         JUDGE LU: I'm going to ask you to pull that microphone
 6
       right up to you please and talk right into the microphone,
       please.
 7
          MR. WADLOW: First off, good morning. My name's, again,
 8
       it's Wilson Wadlow.
 9
         Today is November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
10
11
         I just want to start off by saying that I'm a drug addict
12
       in recovery.
13
          I'm also a convicted felon of a non-violent drug related
       crime.
14
15
         I'm also a Veteran of the United States Army.
16
         I'm a loving son and a brother. Also an uncle.
         A little, a little bit about my story, I served six years
17
       in the United States Army before medical discharge.
18
19
         During that six years, I was injured and required multiple
20
       surgeries.
21
         That's when I was first introduced to opiates, and that's
       when my, my battle with addiction began.
22
23
         During this this time with my battle with this addiction,
24
       during my recovery, I was charged with three felony
25
       convictions. I was convicted on all three counts of larceny
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over 250 dollars.

I was sent to jail.

I, I didn't have any opportunity to enter treatment. It was basically, it was, it was, it was jail for me. That's basically the, the option the Judge gave me.

So I did my, my jail sentence, and, and I got out and I entered treatment on my own terms.

I just want to say that, that, you know, honestly I feel that, that this, you know, the larceny over 250 dollars, that, you know, if, if, if I was, if I wasn't given a chance to, you know, if this was turned into a misdemeanor, and I wasn't convicted of these felonies, you know, my whole life could have gone different up to this point.

You know, up to this point, I've had trouble getting jobs.

I feel like there's a stigma towards me because I'm a

convicted felon now.

Even though I'm a, a Veteran of the United States Army, I feel like that doesn't even matter. I feel like jobs don't look at that. They, they look at your felony conviction even if it's something so simple as of, you know, larceny.

And which I know in some people's eyes, that's a, obviously a serious thing, and in other people's eyes, it's, it's not.

But, you know, this all stemmed from my drug addiction, and, you know, I just wish that things could have been different. I wish that I had a chance to maybe give treatment

a shot, and maybe if I completed treatment, then maybe they could have been lowered to misdemeanors or maybe the Courts could have worked with me in some, some way.

And I just hope that, you know, in the future, that maybe this law could get changed. Maybe raise the, the price that it, constitutes a, a felony conviction due to larceny that way, in the future, you know, drug addicts and other Veterans like me will, who have served their country, you know, and I am a good, I'm a very good person, you know. I have a, you know, I have good morals. I was raised correctly.

I don't feel like, that the stigma of being a felon, I don't feel like that, that's who I am today.

But I, I'd like to, that's why I'm here representing, you know, people who were in situations like me, that way it can, you know, maybe we can do something about it and give someone else a better life down the, down the line because it's going to be hard for me to find jobs for the rest of my life.

Whether I, maybe in ten years when I can possibly get that felony expunged, I don't know how that works, but if it can prevent them the first place, then I think that would be a, a really great thing.

And that's why I'm here.

- So, once again, thank you very much for letting me speak.

 JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Wadlow.
- Mr. Baptista? Please pull that microphone right up there,

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1
       please.
 2
         MR. BAPTISTA: Again, my name's Valenti Baptista.
 3
         I'm here to, to testify in strong support of the Social
       Justice Reinvestment Act.
 4
 5
         I came from a dysfunctional family, middle class --
         JUDGE LU: Tell, tell us, I want to make sure the
 6
       stenographer, what's your first name, please?
 7
         MR. BAPTISTA: Valenti.
 8
 9
         JUDGE LU: Okay.
10
         MR. BAPTISTA: V-A-L-E-N-T-I.
11
         JUDGE LU: Thank you.
12
         MR. BAPTISTA: Baptista.
         I came from a, a single family, poor, middle, lower middle
13
14
       class family, single mother, and she was a drug addict.
15
         She did her best to raise me right.
16
         You know, I went to school, got good grades, was a good
17
       kid, stayed out of trouble till about high school, and then I,
       I developed into a troubled teen following the wrong crowd,
18
19
       doing drugs, committing petty crimes.
20
         I was charged with my, my first two felonies at 19 years
21
       old for larceny of alcohol and clothing, barely over 250, and
22
       I was given two years' probation.
23
         I believe the Court should have mandated me to, to have
       drug treatment, and I had a, basically supervised, just
24
25
       supervised probation, no drug testing, no drug counseling,
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nothing of that nature.

Just two years' probation.

And in order to pay my restitution and fees, I tried to get, I tried to get work to pay my restitution and fees, and I was released from two good jobs because of, because of my CORI check. One was a union job at Stop and Shop Deli, and the other one was a maintenance man in a nursing home.

Having to resort, you know, to doing construction labor under the table for, for lower than minimum wage, and, and do minimum wage jobs like fast food restaurants and stuff like that.

I resorted to selling drugs and back into my old behavior, and I racked up lists, a list of similar felonies.

And I had a drug problem, an alcohol problem.

So I, and my disease progressed, and I racked up a couple of sheets of similar charges.

Feeling like I had nothing to lose, you know, I was already far from the path I wanted to take and I was happy with, and you know, my disease just got horrible.

And like I said, I just kept racking up felony after felony for similar cases of larcenies, destruction, just destruction of my life, you know.

So I, I can, I continually violated my probation for the next six years with no drug treatment, just, just trying to pay my fines, you know, keep extending it, trying to pay my

fines.

And six years later, later, being on probation, I finally clocked out to six months in the House of Correction just so I could clear up my probation fees.

And it isn't until today that I finally like willingly went, and, went and I'm in a treatment facility now, you know, finally trying to get my life back together.

And I think addicts like myself who have, who have kind of blown their, their life at a young age will have a better opportunity to be reintegrated into society and rehabilitated if, if there was more programs for young adults and teenagers and, to get their lives together without just throwing them in jail for felonies or just ruining their record and their CORI check.

I believe, I believe I would have had a better chance to get back, my life back on track, you know, and if I had, if I got drug treatment and I was able to get back on track with work and, and get back into society, not resort to a more hardened criminal lifestyle, with, you know, no regards of how my life was going to turn out until now willingly, I'm trying to get my life back together because I was raised better than that. I know that's not the life my mother would have wanted me to have. And, you know, I'm just trying to live a life of morals and values like Wilson said.

And just try to, try to, I'm trying to redirect, you know,

1 redirect my life with my own will now. 2 You know, the drugs aren't, aren't directing my life. 3 And I'm just trying to be a normal citizen, you know, be productive in society, and be an example for other addicts, 4 5 you know, to turn their life around. You know, anything's possible. 6 7 And that's basically why I'm here. I just wanted to say 8 that. 9 Thank you. 10 JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Baptista. All right. So do members of the Commission have questions 11 12 for the representatives of Jobs Not Jails? Mr. Rosenthal? 13 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes. I --14 15 JUDGE LU: Let's, let's give the floor to Judge George's, Mr. Rosenthal. 16 I think you'll --17 18 JUDGE GEORGE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. 19 Elizabeth, I want to make sure I pronounce your last name. 20 Is it Milhans? MS. MILHANS: Milhans. 21 22 JUDGE GEORGE: Milhans? 23 Good morning. 24 MS. MILHANS: Good morning.

JUDGE GEORGE: One of the things that I ask of, of you and

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1
       of Mr. Wadlow and Mr. Baptista is to inform some of the
 2
       earlier testimony.
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         Were you all incarcerated as a result of mandatory
       minimums?
 4
 5
         And I know that you said that you were, but was that for a
 6
       possessory crime or was it for a sale crime, a distribution
 7
       crime?
 8
         MS. MILHANS: Possession, simple.
 9
         JUDGE GEORGE: It was a, it was a --
10
         MS. MILHANS: -- for --
11
         JUDGE GEORGE:, mandatory 18 months for possession?
12
         MS. MILHANS: 16.
         JUDGE GEORGE: 16 for possession? Okay.
13
14
         And Mr. Wadlow, were, were you also, was it a mandatory
15
       sentence?
16
         MR. WADLOW: Yes. It was a possession?
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         JUDGE GEORGE: And same with you, Mr. Baptista?
         MR. BAPTISTA: I actually was never charged with any
18
19
       possessions. Mine was all addiction fed on larcenies, you
20
       know, trying to feed my addiction, larceny over 250.
21
         JUDGE GEORGE: Okay. And were any of those dispositions as a
22
       result of plea negotiations and you were initially charged
       with more serious crimes?
23
24
         MS. MILHANS: No.
25
         JUDGE GEORGE: All possessory?
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1
         MR. BAPTISTA: Excuse me?
 2
         JUDGE GEORGE: Just one, were any of, were any of you
 3
       charged with more serious crimes and it was a reduction in
       consideration for taking the plea on possessory crimes?
 4
         MS. MILHANS: No, sir.
 5
         JUDGE GEORGE: No?
 6
         MS. MILHANS: Mine was not.
 7
         JUDGE GEORGE: Okay.
 8
 9
         Mr. Wadlow?
10
         MR. WADLOW: I was a, first, I was charged with larceny over
       250. And then came the possession of a Class A, you know, a
11
12
       little bit down the line.
13
         And that basically seemed like it was the, kind of the
       final straw for the Judge.
14
15
         MR. BAPTISTA: Actually, when I finally copped out, the
16
       larcenies and, they, they lowered my, one of my pleadings to a
17
       larceny because I took a deal to do the six months. I was
18
       facing two and a half years.
19
         JUDGE GEORGE: Okay. All right.
20
         Thank you all very much.
21
         And to Mr. Wadlow and Mr. Baptista, very good luck on your,
22
       your recovery, very much so.
23
         MR. WADLOW: Thank you.
24
         JUDGE GEORGE: Thank you --
25
         JUDGE LU: Okay.
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1
         JUDGE GEORGE: -- Mr. Chairman.
         JUDGE LU: Thank you. Thank you, Judge.
 2
 3
         Mr. Rosenthal?
         MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes. I just had a quick comment on, I think
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 5
       this is Mr. Beardsley, the doctor --
 6
         Any, anyway, on your comment about the felony threshold,
       and, and I was proud to be at CPCS in the '80s when we urged
 7
       that they be raised from 100 to 250 was, was done, and that's
 8
 9
       quite a while ago.
10
         But if I were to urge people to take a look at Chapter 211E
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       which is our enabling law, and it's very broad, and I hope
12
       this Commission will be willing to look at the issue.
         And we certainly have authority under the 211E Section 1C,
13
       among other things, the Commission shall make recommendations
14
15
       to the legislature concerning modifications of laws and
16
       relating to the crimes and sentencing.
17
         So I don't see why that's not part of that issue and I'm
       hopeful this Commission at some point will be willing to look
18
19
       at it.
20
         So, but again, I urge people to look at 211E, even non-
       lawyers.
21
         JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Mr. Rosenthal.
22
23
         I don't see any more questions from the Commission.
         I thank you all very, very much--
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25
         MR. WADLOW: Thank you.
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1
         JUDGE LU: -- for talking to us and giving us your
 2
       perspective.
 3
         Thank you.
         MR. WADLOW: Thank you.
 4
 5
         MS. A: Mr. Wadlow --
 6
         JUDGE LU: Sorry.
         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Mr. Wadlow, thank you for your service. I
 7
 8
       appreciate it.
 9
         MR. WADLOW: You're welcome.
10
         JUDGE LU: All right. I'm going to call now on Anthony
       Benedetti, the Chief Counsel of the Committee for Public
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12
       Counsel Services.
         MR. BENEDETTI: Hi.
13
         JUDGE LU: Good morning, Mr. Benedetti.
14
15
         MR. BENEDETTI: Good morning.
16
         JUDGE LU: Come up, have a seat, make yourself comfortable.
17
         Pull that microphone right up to you --
18
         MR. BENEDETTI: Sure.
         JUDGE LU: -- if you would be so kind.
19
20
         I'm going to ask you to please state your name and spell it
       for the stenographer.
21
22
         MR. BENEDETTI: Certainly.
         Anthony Benedetti, B-E-N-E-D-E-T-T-I.
23
         JUDGE LU: Okay.
24
25
         Good morning, and welcome, and please give us your thoughts
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on this subject.

MR. BENEDETTI: Sure.

Judge, good morning. Members of the Commission, good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you and speak.

I'm trying to, I'm going to try and give a broad overview of my thoughts. I know this Commission has quite a broad scope in terms of the areas they're, that you can look at, and you've heard from a number of individuals who touched on some of the points that I wanted to make.

So I will, I will try and be brief and then answer some questions.

A couple, I'm going to touch upon a, a, three general areas.

Over criminalization, arrest, prosecution, and incarceration, and reentry and recidivism because I think all three of those general categories cover some of the many problems that I think exist in the system and that, and that we see representing the, fair to say the overwhelming majority of individuals who get caught up in the criminal justice system at CPCS.

First of all, it's our experience, and I think the numbers show, that far too much conduct has been criminalized in Massachusetts which has resulted in far too many people who are being swept up into the system.

Essentially, we have a criminal justice system that in many ways has criminalized poverty, has criminalized homelessness, individuals with drug and mental health illnesses being treated as criminals instead of being treated in more appropriate ways.

In a different, in addition, juveniles being treated as criminals instead of being treated or, or, or instead of an appropriate response to typical teen behavior.

And in some instances, we see teenagers are treated criminally for the same conduct that adults are treated civilly, and, and that we see happens in a lot of towns with local ordinances.

Generally, the overwhelming number of cases in the system are low level, as many as 60 percent of arrests in many places around the county are for misdemeanors, and Massachusetts historically has criminalized more conduct than other states.

Bob Spangenberg in the Spangenberg Group a few years back came in and looked at the misdemeanors in Massachusetts and found that a lot more conduct is treated criminally in Massachusetts than it is in many other states.

In fact, if you look at the CPCS budget, which for the last five years has hovered around 200 million, the over, 70 percent of that, of, of that figure is criminal and the overwhelming portion of that is for services provided in District Court.

You, you might read in the Herald that the amount of money we pay attorneys to represent individuals in murder cases is a lot of money, but the bulk of our funding is for District Court misdemeanor cases.

CPCS over the last few years has been advocating that many of these offenses be reclassified as civil offenses.

I think in areas like automobile offenses, disorderly person disturbing the peace.

And the legislature has taken some steps in that direction.

The public took a step in that direction with possession of Class D, and we've seen, we've seen the result in our budget in terms of a reduction in costs in those areas.

There are millions spent on defending individuals charged with low level misdemeanors and there is undoubtedly, undoubtedly quite a lot of money spent in other areas of the system for these same offenses.

You decriminalize a lot of these low level misdemeanors, and you eliminate the collateral consequences associated with these guilty pleas and convictions as well as the potential for future sentence enhancements.

With respect to arrests, prosecution, and incarceration, again, far too many people are caught up in the system, most of whom are people of color.

Many of these individuals come from communities that are low income. They lack access to adequate education, adequate

job opportunities.

Mandatory minimums we see as a policy which has failed.

I know you've heard a lot of conversation about that and, and advocates of mandatory minimums will argue that it deters offenders, it reduces crimes, it aids those dependent on substance abuse, it provides uniform sentencing, it eliminates sentencing disparities, and it preserves appropriate sentence discretion.

Whether you examine each of those together or separately, the fact remains that mandatory minimums have not, do not, and will never fulfill any of these promises.

And in addition, they're extremely costly.

It's a failed policy.

With respect to deterrents, there have been numerous studies that show that mandatory minimums have little to no effect as a deterrent.

Over the last decade, and, and I don't think I have to tell many of you, who are experts in, in these, these areas, a number of states have engaged in sentencing and prison reform, many of which involved eliminating or reducing mandatory minimum sentences, and in each of those states, crime rates have fallen, which indicates that the rationale that mandatory minimums result in deterrents does not hold up.

Crime reduction, mandatory minimums promise to reduce crime. That does not happen.

I think the fact that we're seeing this crisis with opioids shows that mandatory minimums does not result in the reduction in, in crime. It's a public health problem.

With respect to uniform sentencing and sentencing disparities, attorney, anyone who practices in different counties, in different Courts across the state can tell you the mandatory drug sentences are enforced differently depending upon where you practice, and they're enforced differently depending whether you're in a, in an urban area or a suburban area.

I practiced, albeit it was a long time ago, but you talk to people who practice in Plymouth County, and, and John Redden who sits on the Commission practiced on Plymouth County.

When I practiced there, there was a policy that mandatory minimum sentences would not be reduced.

And so the luck of the draw, if you got caught in Plymouth County, you were going to face a much harsher sentence than you would if you were caught in one of the other counties.

There were instances where sentences would not be reduced, and we were forced to go to trial.

And in, and in my opinion, and, and honestly it was my opinion that the jury felt the same way, that these cases should not have been brought to trial, and they were a complete waste of the Court's time, the jury's time, and everyone else involved in the system.

So the idea that these sentences have brought uniformity across the state and, and people are treated the same based on the charge is a complete fallacy, and I think many of you, you have seen that in, in your, in your jobs.

With respect to discretion, I would, I would argue what others before you, before me have argued, that it, they remove sentencing determination from Judges who are the ones who are in the best position to look at the individual's background, the individual's criminal history, the individual's actual involvement in the crime, and the circumstances of the crime, the severity of the offense, and all aggravating and mitigating evidence.

The District Attorneys have argued that only one percent of those convicted in Fiscal Year 2013 were subject to a drug mandatory minimum, and the problem with those numbers is it fails to accurately portray how these sentences work.

In 2013, I believe these are Sentencing Commission numbers.

In 2013, only 4.7 percent of those charged with a school zone offense were convicted of a school zone, but we haven't been able to get statistics that show how many people are originally charged with mandatory minimums because that's the accurate, that's the, those are the figures you want to look at, who is charged with mandatory minimums, not how many people are convicted of mandatory minimums. That gives you the true, that shows you the true effect of the mandatory minimum

sentences on the, on the system.

With respect to the, the treating of addiction, it is definitely a positive step that the conversation around the opioid problem has focused on it as a public health problem and not a criminal justice problem, and we're hopeful that that, that continues to be the direction that these conversations go in.

I've already talked about the cost.

So those are mandatory, mandatory minimums.

With respect to sentences over all, they generally are longer, and they're harsher.

The District Attorneys talk about the fact that

Massachusetts is better than most of the country, and the

problem with that is the incarceration rate since the 1970s

has quadrupled, and if Massachusetts was a separate country,

it would be third or fourth in the world in terms of the

incarceration rate.

Massachusetts can do better.

I don't think it's good enough that we're one of the best in the country. We should still work to improve because something is not working.

There have been a number of studies that show length longer sentences do not improve public safety.

There was a study out of John Jay College in New York which tells us that increased rates and/or duration of incarceration

does not reduce recidivism.

There were, the Pathway to Desistance Studies by Ed Mulvey out of the Department of Justice showing incarceration dramatically is overused with kids aged 18 to 24.

Finally, with respect to reentry and recidivism, those who truly do need to be locked up need to be given the tools to succeed upon their release. There needs to be more money put into programs, job training, rehabilitation, public housing.

This, many come out. They're saddled with all of these obstacles. They're saddled with collateral consequences. They're saddled with their CORI record.

And there have been numerous examples where people who want to get a job talk about how they're not able to get a job because they have a criminal record.

For many offenses, there's a, there's no sense that you've served your time, and you've, or you've paid your, your penalty.

There's too many barriers, and the way the system is set up now, it's as if it's, it's set up to promote recidivism instead of help people improve their lives.

And the last point I'll touch on is there's been a lot of conversation for, for several years about mandatory post-release supervision. And I would, I would submit to you that we have post-release supervision, and it's called parole.

And that the majority of people should be paroled and given

the opportunity to reintegrate into society while on parole.

One of the biggest problems that we see with mandatory post-release supervision is, first of all, unless you eliminate mandatory minimums, you essentially will be lengthening the sentences of, of anyone who was sentenced under a mandatory minimum.

And the second point is there'd be a real concern that parole would parole at a lesser rate if they know an individual is going to receive the mandatory post-release supervision.

And so I think if this Commission was going to recommend some sort of mandatory post-release supervision, that it should make parole presumptive, and that only individuals who do not receive parole, who don't want parole, are, are subjected to some kind of mandatory post release supervision.

It would be more cost effective, and it would get at those, at the small group of individuals who really do need to serve out their entire sentence.

So I'll, I'll leave it at that and answer any questions that any Commission Members have.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Benedetti.

All right. Mr. Mazzone?

MR. MAZZONE: Very quickly, Mr. Benedetti. Kind of a big picture question, and I don't know if CPCS has a position or if you personally have a position, and this is something that

the, that the Commission's been wrestling with.

Do you find any value in uniformity of sentencing when it comes to, when it comes to sentencing throughout the Commonwealth, meaning X, Y, and Z factors, you should be able to get a particular sentence in Suffolk County, and the same in, in Berkshire County, or, or should it just be left to the discretion of every individual Judge on a case by case basis?

MR. BENEDETTI: I think for the most part, it should, there always should be an opportunity for a Judge to examine individual characteristics of a defendant or of, of a crime, the facts of a crime.

I think Judges are in the best position to really, to know what an appropriate sentence is in a particular circumstance.

All of you who have worked in the system, whether you've, whether you've been a prosecutor or a defense attorney or a Judge, every case is different, every defendant is different, their background and what led them to commit the crime.

And so, and, and oftentimes, there are, there are facts which can help the Judge reach an appropriate disposition for one individual that may not be appropriate for another individual.

MR. MAZZONE: And one quick follow up, and this is $\operatorname{--}$

MR. BENEDETTI: Sure.

MR. MAZZONE: So then you're, you're comfortable with the idea that the, the Judges are different, it sounds like

they'll be a measure of sub, subjectivity to it, but you're comfortable with that, like a Judge, you know, or even in the same courthouse the next day, having just years difference in the, in the penalty?

MR. BENEDETTI: I am. I think there was a lot of conversation around this point before the Judiciary Committee about well if Judges are allowed to sentence, will it be like the, the bad old days.

MR. MAZZONE: Yeah.

MR. BENEDETTI: I wasn't around back in those days.

And there seemed to be some, some consensus, and I would agree that it's, it's different now.

There's a lot more attention being paid to Judges and, and so I think that for the most part, there's a range, and I don't think Judges will, will sentence extremely beyond that range in either direction. I think it all evens out.

And so I, I would be comfortable with, with Judges having discretion.

MR. MAZZONE: Okay. Thank you. You've answered my question.

JUDGE LU: Okay. I think the Secretary of Public Safety, Dan

Bennett, had a question.

MR. BENNETT: Let's say just for a second.

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Can't hear you.

MR. BENNETT: I apologize.

JUDGE LU: Put that right up if you would.

MR. BENNETT: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you.

MR. BENNETT: Just say there was an agreement that mandatory minimums for drugs should be under strict scrutiny.

But are there other mandatory minimums that you agree with for first and second degree murder or OUI fourth or OUI causing death? Are those something you believe should stay in place as opposed to the mandatory minimums on drugs where someone's life has been lost? Should there be mandatory minimums there?

MR. BENEDETTI: I mean, philosophically, I think mandatory minimums are a bad idea, but I think my focus, our focus has been on drugs. And I do think one of the major factors for that is because of the incredible racial disparity that exists around mandatory minimums with drugs.

I mean I don't think, when you look at the statistics and look at how often whites use, use and sell drugs versus people of color, there is no way anyone can believe that the, it, there's a justification for the difference.

There's no way people of color use, should be imprisoned at the rate they are compared to whites when you look at the usage of, usage rates and the rate at which people sell.

I mean I think anyone could, could agree that if the Police policed college campuses in the same way that they do inner city, I think you'd see a big, a big outcry.

1 And so I think that's really the, the biggest issue that 2 drives the, the need for reform around mandatory minimums. 3 MR. BENNETT: But philosophical, philosophically, you're against the minimum mandatory even for murders? 4 5 MR. BENEDETTI: First degree murder? MR. BENNETT: Yes. 6 7 MR. BENEDETTI: Well, I mean the focus has always been no 8 death penalty, and so we're happy that the Commonwealth 9 doesn't have a death penalty. 10 And so I think until the death penalty is eliminated in the 11 country, I think that conversation can wait. 12 MR. BENNETT: Right. Okay. 13 Even for us who absolutely agree with you a hundred percent there should be no death penalty, but those, okay. Thank you. 14 15 JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Can I ask a question? JUDGE LU: Go ahead. 16 17 Can you pull that right up, please? JUDGE HEFFERNAN: First of all, thank you very much for your 18 19 thoughtful comments. Always appreciate to hear from, from you. 20 Can you tell me, we heard from, and we've heard as a 21 Commission from the defense representatives around mandatory 22 post-release supervision that it is net widening so called, 23 that you know these so called technical probation violations and etcetera will extend someone's sentence. 24 25 Do you feel that?

Or, or I heard you say something a little differently which I thought, not, tell me what you, could you clarify about mandatory post-release supervision and how you think it would help if we eliminated mandatory minimum sentences for drugs for example?

MR. BENEDETTI: Well, the, the concern would be that if, if parole was not presumptive, that you could have a parole board and, and you, without, without a policy in place, administrations change, personnel change, and people can have the best of intentions, and then a new parole board comes in and decides we're not going to take a chance on these individuals, let them get mandatory post-release supervision. Then, then it's not something we have to worry about.

But if parole was presumptive and, and some form of mandatory post-release supervision was set up for individuals that clearly should not be paroled, that might be something we could, we could see working.

But the concern would be that essentially the parole rate would stay low and that too many people would end up on mandatory post release supervision.

I remember when it was first proposed, it was proposed to the District Court and the Superior Court. And the idea, first of all, I don't know how, how we'd get the money to pay for that.

And so that, that's the real concern, is that it would be a

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       substitute for parole, for, for too many people.
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         Does that --
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Yeah. No, I --
         MR. BENEDETTI: -- answer your question?
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: -- I, you know, again, in a former life,
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       mandatory post-release supervision was, and the DA's talked
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       about it today, that was supposed to be, or contemplated as a
       critical piece for re, recidivism, you know, reduction.
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         I'm, you know, I'm interested, you're right. It plays out
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       differently in all sorts of mandatory minimums.
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         So I'm interested in your comments on it.
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         Thank you.
         JUDGE LU: Okay. We'll, we'll, I think Mary Alice Doyle from
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       the Deputy First Assistant DA in Essex County has a question.
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         MS. DOYLE: Good morning.
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         MR. BENEDETTI: Good morning.
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         MS. DOYLE: Thank you for your testimony.
         I just have one question for you this morning.
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         JUDGE LU: Would you pull that microphone right up if you
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       would? Thank you. Thank you.
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         MS. DOYLE: All right.
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         And you're aware defendants have a right to a sentencing
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       appeal post-conviction in Superior Court.
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         Should the DAs have that same right perhaps on a outlier
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       sentence that victims feel are, is too lenient?
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1 MR. BENEDETTI: I, I guess, I would have to, I'm not trying 2 to avoid your question.

I, I think the devil, to use that term that everyone uses, the devil is in the details.

I would have to see under what circumstances would the District Attorneys have the right to appeal, and how far outside the guidelines or how extreme would the sentence have to be before a DA could appeal.

So I wouldn't say necessarily no, but I'd want to see a little bit more as to how that would work and when it, when they would have the opportunity to do that.

MS. DOYLE: Thank you.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman, I --

JUDGE LU: Mr. Rosenthal?

MR. ROSENTHAL: One very quick comment, and one very quick question.

Again, if folks looked at Chapter 211E, my reading of it, and I've looked at it about fifty times now, is that it basically mandates the Commission to incorporate mandatory minimum laws into your guidelines with the departure process, so, with the exception of murder.

So that's my comment.

My question is back to the civil infraction and misdemeanor issue which I agree with your comments, and we've worked together, so it won't be surprising to anybody in the room.

Could you, without naming names and without getting too specific, tell us what's been the efforts to expand that law, Chapter 277, Section 70C, to give a Judge the authorization to rule over the objection of a prosecutor possibly with an appeals process, which would get back to the possibility of the Brandano, <u>Cheney</u> line of, of cases, and that, I realize that's a somewhat complicated question.

But has that been --

JUDGE LU: Maybe you can spell Cheney for the --

MS. A: Yeah, exactly.

JUDGE LU:, for the stenographer?

MR. ROSENTHAL: I think Cheney has two, C-H-E-N I think there's a second N-E-Y, C-H-E-N-E-Y? Which overruled a process called Brandano which gave Judges from the case the authority to dismiss a case in the interest of justice upon affidavits and with an appeal process for the prosecutor if they were dissatisfied which could be scrutinized by higher Courts.

So it seems to me there's an analogous issue between that and 277, 70C and putting, but if the legislature enacted it, including the Brandano process, I think the SJC would have okayed it.

MR. BENEDETTI: I don't, I don't know what, what's, the result of that has been.

With respect, with respect to the civil infraction piece -- MR. ROSENTHAL: That's what I'm asking about basically.

MR. BENEDETTI: Well, okay. I know there are certain counties where proforma motions are filed to prevent those from being treated as civil.

It's, in our opinion, it's not used as frequently as it could be.

It's, it's complicated because on one hand we make the argument be we want to, we're always, like every agency, trying to figure out where we might be able to reduce costs.

And someone can be facing a, a criminal charge, and if it's treated as a civil infraction, then there's no collateral consequences.

That's, that's the ideal world.

But if it's treated from the beginning where the Judge and the DA recognize that there is no possibility of jail time so therefore no counsel, the concern there is that there are so many collateral consequences with so many of these low level offenses is that somebody's going to get, get, get hooked on some low level misdemeanor without the, the benefit of an attorney, and then they have a second offense, and they get brought back in, and maybe they wouldn't have pled to that low level misdemeanor if they had an attorney to say the, the elements of the crime aren't here, you don't need to plead, you should fight this.

So, so it's, it's, I'm not sure what the answer is other than decriminalizing a lot of these offenses.

There was a Civil Infraction Commission a number of years ago, and all, representatives from all stakeholders were on this Commission, and we spent a lot of time really looking at a number of offenses and looking at how other states treated a number of offenses, low level misdemeanors.

And obviously there's difference of opinion on what is low level.

And, and the Commission never really reached a final decision, but I, or a final report, but I do think that might be a starting point for this Commission to look at some of the materials that there produced as a result of, of that work.

We looked at the issue which I think came up earlier of raising, you know, larceny under and over, changing the, the threshold which hasn't been changed in a, in a number of years.

But there was a lot of work done, and a lot of, a lot of good discussions about consequences of, of decriminalizing some of these offenses.

So, and it certainly can, can, can try and produce some of those materials for this Commission if that's an, an area that you think you might want to take a look at.

MR. ROSENTHAL: I would love to see that report. It's one, one thing --

MR. BENEDETTI: But it was no report. The, a report was never produced, but we certainly have --

MR. ROSENTHAL: Some materials?

MR. BENEDETTI: -- we probably can provide materials that would at least inform the Commission.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Okay. Commissioner O'Brien, Commissioner Carol O'Brien?

MS. O'BRIEN: Yes. I just want, I want to go back to the post-release supervision issue for, for a moment.

And isn't both post-release supervision and parole basically are an aid to reentry? Aren't they one in the same and couldn't they not be one in the same?

The first part.

And then the second would be what would you pro, think about the possibility of presumptive release on parole or post-release supervision for some, you know, offenses depending upon how you categorize, if you think about the possibility of traditional release being applied to more serious offenses, and the presumptive release would be on what people would consider nonviolent or crimes, property crimes versus crimes against a person?

MR. BENEDETTI: So I'll, I'll start with the first question.

They could be one in the same in terms of envisioning how it would work.

The proposal that had been around for a number of years, my memory is that the way it worked is once you were released,

then you would be put on mandatory post-release supervision, and the length of time would depend on where you being released from District Court, were you being released from Superior Court, how long had you been sentenced to jail, and that would, that would define how long you'd be on mandatory post release supervision.

But I think in, in answering your question, I could see it being one in the same if individuals were paroled, provided services while in prison, and then were paroled and provided with the appropriate tools to try and help them integrate back into society.

So are you suggesting that you'd be released on parole and at the same time, you would be on, the, the level of supervision would be --

MS. O'BRIEN: I'm saying, I'm saying it could be, it's the same, it's really the same thing because one of the things that we see routinely is that a lot of these offenders, if they become, you know, or people that put, you know, get incarcerated, and then the, if the gradual reduction of custody isn't there and some, and the statistics show that being released from a walled facility, there's a lesser success rate than people who actually get released from minimum or prelease, and that the supervision in the community doesn't, more so could be there as a guide to be helping people with, access the reentry services so that those

collateral issue that were discussed or maybe aren't, you know can be dealt with.

MR. BENEDETTI: No, I, I completely agree that, that it, reintegration and the effort at eliminating the possibility of recidivism should begin the first day they're behind bars, whether it's a House of Correction or a state prison.

A plan should be set up knowing that the individual is going to get out some day, and so doing exactly what you're suggesting, that not keeping somebody in the highest security but moving them through the system down to a lower level of security so that when they are reduced, whether, when they're released, whether it's on parole or mandatory, or some sort of post release, post incarceration supervision, they're better able to succeed.

- MS. O'BRIEN: Right.
- MR. BENEDETTI: So does that --
- 17 MS. O'BRIEN: Yeah.

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- 18 | MR. BENEDETTI: -- okay.
- MS. O'BRIEN: Thank you.
- MR. BENEDETTI: Thank you.
- JUDGE LU: All right. Mr. Callahan from the Chairman of the Parole Board.
- 23 MR. CALLAHAN: Good morning.
- MR. BENEDETTI: Good morning.
- 25 MR. CALLAHAN: And thank you for appearing and for your

1 testimony. With regards to the presumptive parole, as it currently 2 3 stands, parole is essentially evidenced based, based on looking --4 5 JUDGE LU: Can you pull that towards you? 6 MR. CALLAHAN: Sorry. JUDGE LU: Thank you so much. 7 8 MR. CALLAHAN: The, parole is currently essentially evidence 9 base, based on looking at offender's incarceration record, 10 whether he was doing program as the Commissioner just 11 discussed. 12 Would you be concerned with presumptive parole that the incentive for the offender to do the programming while 13 incarcerated would not be there and it would dis-incentivized 14 15 from doing the program? 16 And on a, second part of that question is, would be that, 17 you know, currently we have -- obviously have one day spreads. Mostly I would guess would be with mandatory minimums, but 18 19 there are one day spreads where the person is essentially not 20 going to be parole eligible. 21 What are your thoughts on those sentences, and do you think that is a, currently an effective tool? 22 MR. BENEDETTI: Well, my experience and, and my own personal 23

experience which was a while ago and experience in listening

to people about that, the second issue that you raised, the

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one day spread, is that they are given by Judges in mandatory minimum cases where the Judge feels that they have no other option.

They don't want to sentence them to the mandatory, the minimum, and so, but they have to, and so they don't want to sentence, sentence them to the minimum, and they'd rather sentence them to lesser time, then they have no other options but to do the, the, you know, the five to five and a day.

And so I don't think anybody thinks those are a good idea.

I think if you got rid of mandatory minimums, that I think most of those would go away.

MR. CALLAHAN: Well, we've heard, not necessarily today, but we've heard in the past from some defenses attorneys that they're, they actually, I'm not going to say that they're for them but at times the offender or the person pleading prefers the one day spread because there's certainty to the, the sentence.

Do you, do you have any thoughts on that?

MR. BENEDETTI: In non-mandatory minimum?

MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

MR. BENEDETTI: I, I could see why a defendant would like that because they're not sure whether or not they're going to get paroled, and parole rates have been low, and, and haven't looked at the latest parole numbers.

But at least over the, the last few years, they've been

pretty low.

And so you can see why somebody would prefer not to take a chance in getting, in getting paroled.

And so I could see in certain cases where a defendant might be okay with the, with the one day spread.

But it certainly doesn't help with the, the reentry issue, no doubt.

MR. CALLAHAN: What about the, the first part of my question I guess got lost in the second.

But in terms of, what about the dis-incentivizing of doing programing while incarcerated if parole is presumptive?

MR. BENEDETTI: Well, I think part of some pre, a program where parole was presumptive would require people to participate, participate in programs.

I mean I think, and again, the, the devil is in the details on, on this kind of new idea of mandatory post-release supervision.

But I think you would, you would only be able to be paroled presumptively if you were participating in programs.

But that means there are enough programs for people to participate in.

I don't think it, it really helps any of us when, or the money isn't put into the prisons, so that there are enough programs that people can participated.

I mean if, if there's 20 spots in a program and you're the

21st person and then parole comes up and sorry, you're not 1 getting paroled, you weren't in a program, that's, you know, 2 3 that's, that's not fair. So the systems need to be in place in the institutions 4 5 before you can answer to some sort of presumptive parole. 6 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. 7 JUDGE LU: John Redden? MR. REDDEN: Yes. I probably, I probably should that Mr. 8 9 Benedetti --10 JUDGE LU: Can you pull that microphone right up? 11 MR. REDDEN: -- Mr. Benedetti's one of my many bosses. In fact, he's, he's my top boss. 12 13 MR. BENEDETTI: You can ask me whatever you like. MR. REDDEN: But I, I will also say this. We haven't talked 14 15 about this, what I'm going to ask him about beforehand, so 16 this is not a set up. I, I'm actually following on I think Mr. Callahan's 17 question about the one and one day spreads. 18 19 And I, I don't know if you found this to be the case now or 20 when you were actually in the trenches so to speak in 21 practicing. But it's not unusual in, in, in many Superior Court cases 22

at least that there will be multiple counts and a lot of times another count will be broken off as a from and after probation 24 count.

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And in general, I, I guess it, some type of post-release supervision sort of occurs on a practical level in many Superior Court cases because the from and after probation sentence is, is a quite frequent sentence.

- I, I don't know if you'd agree with that.
- MR. BENEDETTI: No. I, I mean I've heard that.
- MR. REDDEN: Yeah.

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- MR. BENEDETTI: I've seen that where the Judge is, is essentially sentencing to set up for a, a mandatory post release supervision.
- MR. REDDEN: And, and that of course then leads to the issue of what resources are available for probation to make that supervision meaningful and effective.
 - And also the other danger is sometimes it just sets somebody up to fail all over again, and now gets sentenced the second time on the same case for more time.
- I mean that's, I don't know if you agree with that ==
- 18 MR. BENEDETTI: No, I --
- 19 MR. REDDEN: -- as a problem.
- MR. BENEDETTI: -- I definitely have, have seen that.
- And, and with respect to the resources, I know there's been conversations around what's more appropriate, should it be parole, should it be probation.
- And I wouldn't, I wouldn't weigh in on that other than to say whoever it is, they need to have the resources and the

programs need to be in place.

Otherwise, we're just setting up people to fail.

JUDGE LU: All right. So this witness has been talking for 30 minutes, and it's not his fault because he's been asked questions.

Mr. Rosenthal?

MR. ROSENTHAL: I've, I've heard the comment, on the one day spread and the net, and the net-widening post-supervision, and she, I was honored to be on the Harshbarger Commission of the DOC in 2003 and 4, and there's a lot of discussion about both those issues in that report, and that's when I first heard the term net "net-widening" which applies on page 45 of that report relative to a recommendation to use more post-release supervision.

So just for further thought on this Commission.

JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you so much, Mr. Benedetti. We appreciate it.

MR. BENEDETTI: Thank you. And thank you for your work.

JUDGE LU: Have a good day.

Thank you.

All right. So we're going to call now on, my plan is to go through without a break and anyone can step out, including me, and the Vice Chair will take over.

I'm going to call now, and I hope to have this order right, on Lloyd Fillion and Robert Marra of the Criminal Justice

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Policy Coalition.
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         All right. Good morning. It's still morning.
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         So would you please, welcome.
         Will you please introduce yourself, and please tell us, and
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       spell your name for the stenographer, please.
         MR. FILLION: My name is Lloyd Fillion, that's L-L-O-Y-D, F-
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       I-L-L-I-O-N.
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         JUDGE LU: Good morning.
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         MR. MARRA: My, my name is Bob, Bob Marra, actually
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       pronounced incorrectly all my life. It's really Bob Marra,
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       it's very Italian. The Italian Christian, I mean Irish
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       Christian brothers tried to make me O'Marra, but it's Marra.
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         MR. FILLION: Spell it.
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         MR. MARRA: Two Rs, M-A-R-R-A.
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         JUDGE LU: So which way do you want us to pronounce it?
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         MR. MARRA: I want you to call me Roberto.
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         THE COMMISSION: Roberto.
         JUDGE LU: All right. I can't do the rolling of the R, but I
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       will call you Roberto Marra, or --
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         MR. MARRA: Yes.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay.
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         MR. MARRA: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: And Mr. Lloyd Fillion, welcome.
         And whoever wants to go first is welcome to do so.
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         MR. FILLION: All right. Thank you very much.
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As you mentioned, we're appearing on behalf of the Criminal Justice Policy Coalition.

In 2008, the coalition, which is comprised of attorneys and lay activists, memorialized its opposition to the sentence of life without parole or LWOP, arguing instead for life with the possibility of parole after 25 years as the appropriate sentence for first degree murder and all other crimes currently calling for LWOP.

The coalition is updating and republishing our 2010 paper detailing the reasons for our position, and in the near future, we will provide you with copies for your use.

Much of what I wrote has been mentioned by people before me. The increase in crime up until 1992, and then the drastic decrease which hasn't been paralleled by incarceration rates, and certainly hasn't been paralleled by, by sentences, by LWOP sentences.

In 1977, there were 170 prisoners in Massachusetts with LWOP sentences. There's been a 600 percent increase to 136 prisoners with LWOP sentences today.

Straight through --

1,036 if I made the mistake.

Straight through the decrease which started in the 1990s.

Today, one of the supposed safety valves for LWOP is commutation, but commutations haven't happen in this state since 1997. That's almost a 20 year period.

The felony murder and joint venture laws sometimes produce disproportionality as the shooter can plead out and has on occasion pleaded out to a lesser sentence while accomplices are still in prison serving life.

We all know that fortunately sentencing for juveniles aren't under 18 convicted of murder has been voided, that is life without parole, but there are still individuals, youth, older youth, whom, while their brains are still in development.

As science suggested that development of that, the crucial part of her brain doesn't occur until the mid, the early 20s, and that they should suffer for their lack of development is, from my perspective and from the organization's perspective, disproportionate.

Though I respect my colleague, Anthony Benedetti, his opinion clearly we disagree with on terms of life without parole as a minimum sentences.

And in fact, I believe that this country is moving towards voiding the death penalty.

There are now some 20 states, that's 40 percent of the states, which have no death penalty.

And I don't believe Massachusetts any longer needs to consider life without payroll as a bull work against the return of the death penalty in Massachusetts.

I don't see, personally, I don't see that happening.

In addition, there are probably, statistically, there's some 40 individuals who are serving life without parole who are innocent of the crime of which they were convicted.

Those people should certainly have an opportunity for parole.

We don't argue for an automatic parole after 25 years.

There certainly are some individuals who don't grow, who don't change in prison, and as the 40 who never committed the crime, their, their change is not, for them, change is not an option.

But some do grow and some do heal.

Life without parole shouldn't stop those who can demonstrate that growth from rejoining our community in a manner which is productive.

Recognizing that prisoners, even those who have taken a life, are part of our community will increase the growth of the community as we serve to meet our obligation to all.

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Fillion.

Mr. Marra?

MR. MARRA: I live in Hyde Park. I've worked in healthcare for the last 40 plus years.

Now I'm working full time in criminal justice including for Cambridge Health Alliance where I work closely with our doctors and the Everett Police in helping people coming back with jobs and housing.

I made this switch mostly because I think our criminal justice system is overly harsh, and unfair, incredibly so compared to Europe especially.

And I'm here to speak in support of eliminating the current life without, with, without parole sentence as the great majority countries of Europe have already done, and substituting the sentence of life with the possibility of parole after 25 years.

My perspective comes from a few places.

I grew up in a town, Coxsackie, New York, funny name, on the Hudson River, but gorgeous town but a prison town, 100 miles north of New York City.

Never paid any attention to that prison stuff until I went, I was a third year medical student at Michigan State, went to work for three months in the prison out there.

We had a project that changed the security guard training program, got to, was intentionally asked to meet with lifers, get to know them, get to know correction officials.

Then I got to, a good friend of mine, a rugby teammate got, killed somebody. And then visiting him for 18 years, just went to his parole hearing for the second time around.

Another young friend, I know a soccer mom up there, he was our best soccer referee at 13.

I've been visiting him for eight years.

He ends up being convicted of killing four people in a

Dorchester basement a while ago, eight years ago.

Go to a life without, with, the lifer hearings that are publically accessible, partly trying to understand all this stuff, meet with a few victims when I can. I've met with a very powerful woman in Baltimore whose family member was killed, her husband.

Went to Rome, met the woman over here, but she's the first Italian woman elected to the Italian Parliament.

Her husband was killed. He was the finance minister, Mr. Tarentelli. He was assassinated by the Red Brigade 30 some years ago.

She started visiting him with her 9 year old son in prison, and has been doing that ever since. Thinks the killer should be released.

Like, again, a lot of people in Europe do.

This, that's part of my perspective.

Another part was this past Saturday I went out to, to Saint Susanna's Church in Dedham where 75 Catholics from around Massachusetts, include Mrs. Isaura Mendes, a Dorchester mother with two murdered sons.

Met with Sister Helen, Helen Prejean, the author of Dead

Man Walking to discuss how to eliminate the death penalty in
the United States.

And one of the reflections we had was Pope Francis's words at last year's International Association of Criminal Law,

where he said a life sentence is a hidden death penalty.

That was my only question, if you will, or comment to Sister Prejean when she talked about how bad it was in the south with the death penalty, 20 states put all these people to death.

And then Lloyd's given us this information, 1300 people, 700 percent increase or whatever it is, 600 percent increase in 40 years in this state of Massachusetts with this particular sentence.

Again, according to the Pope and a few of us, another death penalty.

And I said, Sister, you're being too easy on those northerners, including the Massachusetts folks to only question, you know, she's amazing. You wouldn't want to question her too much more than that.

But it's like, yeah, too easy us on northerners.

The other thing we did for another six hours with, you know, her favorite quote, let's, let's, what the eyes don't see the heart can't feel.

And one thing our eyes don't want to see, except very superficially, TV, shows, you know, Tsarnaev trial, and then we're interested in a piece of it, but we don't want to know why it's committed, we don't want to know whom it hurts really, totally, including the victims.

We can't stand that either, partly because we may think

we're even a little guilty for part of that victim's feeling, and we are.

And we don't want to talk too much, I don't think seriously, about how to stop it.

Anyway, assisted by Sister Prejean, we heard personal testimony including from Mrs. Mendes about the humanity of people on death row, the suffering and the willingness to forgive of victim's family members including Mrs. Mendes and the collective harm of trying to prevent violence by being violent, by killing people.

That's violence.

And other examples are seen more clearly, and I only throw this one in, I know we've got a lot of people want to speak here today.

Being provided, as most of you know, every day by the Marshall Report, nonprofit news agency focused on criminal justice, run by Bill Keller, former executive editor of the New York Times.

One of the most powerful accounts in the past that I've read on here, and many of you may have read it too, is when people like you went, sponsored by the Bureau Institute, sponsored by the John Jay folks.

They went to Europe.

There have been two trips in the past two years, but the last trip took the Governor of Connecticut, took Judges, took

DAs, intentionally took conservatives and liberals, took an ex-offender, took church people.

And what did they see? What did they talk about?

They talked about a lot, but just two things that hit me when I read this. You can read this online like I did.

They asked such questions flat out, can we be safe without life sentences?

And can we discipline without using solitary confinement?

And the resounding answer from Europe was yes, and the resounding answer from this country right now is equally no.

I'm so glad you're doing this hearing, I haven't been here before, but I think going with Sister Prejean, I want to stick with that lady pretty close, hearings like this one are much appreciated for the opportunity they provide the Massachusetts public to see what they don't want to see, but they must.

If our feeling hearts are connected to those of victim families, perpetrators and their families, and the greater community, all of us who helped create our violent society and could help prevent the violence we're suffering with.

And just one, I'm a public health guy. I've heard this quote forever, right?

Didn't hear it, I wasn't a public health guy originally. I worked for the Boston City as an administrator.

But, you know, it takes a village to raise a child, African proverb, takes a village.

And we all, public health folks, we like to take credit for all those success stories, you know, the person didn't do it on their own, we helped.

But I have yet to hear the public health folks, not, well, not everybody, there's a bunch of doctors that I'm working with right now who think differently, who think very expansively, but like it takes, it also takes a village to put one in jail.

And we, in this country, seem to want to say no, it's all on you, and especially if you kill somebody. We don't want to hear, we don't want to talk, we don't want to know anything, it's all on you.

But it isn't all on you. It's on, it's on us, and it effects all of us.

That's what I want to, sorry. That's all I want to say today. Sorry.

17 Thank you.

JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Mr. Marra.

So questions for Mr. Marra or Mr. Fillion?

20 Okay.

Thank you so much, Mr. Marra and Mr. Fillion. Have a great day.

23 Thank you so much.

All right. I'm going to call now on Colleen Kirby of the League of Women Voters, Colleen Kirby.

Good morning. 1 MS. KIRBY: Good morning. 2 3 JUDGE LU: have a seat and make yourself comfortable. And pull that microphone right up close to you if you 4 5 would, please. 6 Would you please tell the stenographer your name and spell 7 your name for us. MS. KIRBY: Yes. My name is Colleen Kirby, it's C-O-L-L-E-E-8 9 N, K-I-R-B-Y.10 And I've been to several hearings this year for the League 11 of Women Voters for the, at the Judiciary Committee. This 12 isn't the first time that I've actually gotten to give oral 13 testimony. Over 30 years ago, the League of Women Voters of 14 15 Massachusetts developed positions concerning sentencing 16 quidelines, and they are still relevant today, which is very 17 sad. We support the work of the Sentencing Commission and thank 18 19 you for holding this public hearing. 20 We are glad that you provide sentencing guidelines and are 21 trying to educate the system about sentencing. We also support the use of more alternative sentences and 22 23 that prison should be used as a last resort for violent crimes

This is not currently the case, but we do think we need to

or habitual offenders.

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move more towards prison being considered a last resort.

As our incarcerated population has increased dramatically, as you have heard, since the 1970s, and it is very high relative to the incarcerations rates across the world.

Since 90 percent of the individuals in our system do leave incarceration and return to society, the League thinks that it is, that purely punitive or overlong sentences can jeopardize rehabilitation and reintegration, and these long sentences are not a deterrent to crime.

We also take a stand that child abuse perpetrators should include therapy as an integral part of their sentence.

We oppose all mandatory minimum sentencing proposals as they leave the Judge no room for discretion, which is why we are specifically supporting H162S786 which is an act to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences relating to drug offenses.

And we have included that testimony in our written testimony for your information.

We're concerned that as of January this year, 95 percent of males are serving a sentence longer than three years, yet only 69 percent had committed a violent offense.

And the Department of Corrections projects a decrease of only 0.1 percent per year in the prison population starting from this year out to 2022.

We're also concerned that the prison population is

disproportionately people of color, especially those serving mandatory minimum drug sentences which in that case it's 77 percent.

We are also concerned that sentences for nonviolent drug crimes can be longer than those for violent crimes.

We are offended that the maximum sentence for armed assault with intent to rape can be equal to the second conviction for the sale of two tablespoons of heroin.

We are also concerned that our Court system is treating illegal drug use as a criminal issue rather than as a health issue, and we need this to change.

We need to update our sentencing guidelines and processes so that we don't end up with lengthy sentences for nonviolent crimes, with sentences that decrease an offender's ability to become a productive citizen and do lead to appropriate incarceration for violent crimes.

And we support several of the other things that have been brought up today, but I didn't bring that testimony with me, such as increasing the amount of the felony and decreasing the use of solitary confinement.

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Kirby.

Are there questions from the Commission?

MR. ROSENTHAL: Just --

JUDGE LU: Mr. Rosenthal.

1 MR. ROSENTHAL: -- a very quick comment.

I'm happy to see the League here. I worked with the League people back in the '80s in these issues, so I know you have a long interest.

In terms of the comment you made about prison as a last resort, at some point I suggested to this Commission that we add partly, as one of the purposes, things to, criteria for punishments as per the federal law 3553.

Judge Gants's testimony was parsimony.

So I think that's basically the same principle.

So it's just a comment.

JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Kirby, and thank you to the League of Women Voters for giving us your perspective.

Have a good day.

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15 MS. KIRBY: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: All right. We're going to call now on Leslie Walker of Mass Prisoner's Legal Services.

MS. WALKER: Thank you and good afternoon.

JUDGE LU: Good afternoon, Ms. Walker.

MS. WALKER: Leslie Walker, L-E-S-L-I-E, W-A-L-K-E-R.

JUDGE LU: If you can pull that microphone even closer --

MS. WALKER: Even closer?

JUDGE LU: -- if you would.

MS. WALKER: Sure.

25 Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you. Go ahead.

MS. WALKER: Hello everyone. I know many of you, but I don't know some of you.

Just a brief introduction, Prisoner's Legal Services is a 43 year old prisoner, indigent prisoner's civil practice.

We do not do criminal work. We represent prisoners in their civil leaves in the state jails, Houses of Correction, and state prison.

We have an, we are eight attorneys for nearly 22,000 prisoners, and we focus on health and mental health, segregation, solitary confinement, and extreme conditions of confine, confinement including overcrowding and issues as they arise.

So thank you to Judge Lu for inviting me to testify today.

You've heard from many people, many of whom I agree with.

I wanted to echo a few things from Mr. Benedetti that I thought were particularly helpful and add a few other points of my own.

I imagine you've heard from Commissioner Higgins O'Brien during your meetings, your nonpublic meetings. Sorry. I don't mean to say that they're, they're closed door, but you've had meetings which I'm sure have been posted and did comply with.

But there's an objective point based classification system in the state Department of Corrections.

It's, I have a copy, easily obtainable.

And the first page of the objective point based classification system, it determines when, when prisoners initially enter prison, what security level they need to be housed, maximum, medium, minimum.

There's a, then there's an annual reclassification hearing.

The perhaps unintended consequence of mandatory minimum sentences is the objective point based system is not objective for those serving mandatory minimum sentences.

There are restrictions on stepping down as a result of mandatory minimum sentences.

Some of those are statutory, some of those are policy.

This was the, inaugurated under Governor Romney. There have been changes since it was first inaugurated, this system.

However, there's a, what's called a non-discretionary minimum custody restriction that's corrections speak for and you can't go there.

You can't go to minimum security if Code A, if you're length of time is five years or greater.

So people serving sentences, mandatory minimum sentences, five, ten, fifteen years cannot go to a minimum security prison until they are within five years of their release date.

Which means you have people, some of whom are violent, I am not one to say that drug traffickers are not violent people. I was a public defender for 16 years, and that was certainly not my experience.

But some of those people, once clean and sober, and some who are nonviolent to begin with, they're just horrible addicts who sell to support their habit, are sitting in mod, medium security prisons and a maximum security prison without the benefit of step down, without the benefit of the freedom, the normalization that comes as a part of step down, step down being from maximum to medium to minimum to pre-release.

Furthermore, those serving mandatory minimum sentences, again some of it is statutory, some of it is policy in the Department of Corrections, are barred from prereleases.

There, the data is quite clear that a prerelease is the best place for a person to get a job, to get their, on their feet, to save the money they're earning, to be able to live and work in the community that they're going home to, and that is not a privilege that mandatory minimum drug offenders are able to access.

And I, again, I hope it's an unintended consequence of those laws, because I don't believe the legislatures meant to thwart the rehabilitation available in the Department of Corrections and the county facilities.

By the block, that is in fact happening.

My second comment is the lack of programming, as Mr.

Benedetti said, in the Department of Corrections through, I

don't believe any fault of the Department of Correction.

80 percent of drug, 80 percent of people entering prison

nationally, but certainly in Massachusetts, report being substance abusers.

The Department has, I believe, and I stand corrected if I'm wrong, less than six percent of its beds in the prison are for intensive drug treatment.

It's called the Correctional Recovery Academy. It works pretty well. The research is pretty good. My clients like it. They say they benefit from it.

It's like family therapy. You live in a block, and it's therapy all day groups, individual, mostly groups.

But that is not available to anyone in a maximum security prison which releases over 300 people a year.

There's a tiny bit of drug treatment there, but it has not been measured for its effectiveness, and it's only eligible to a, a few people.

But the Correctional Recovery Academy is only offered in four prisons, and some of it in the, the minimums now I believe which is relatively new and I believe under this administration.

It was not the case under the Patrick Administration.

So drug, if 80 percent of people report being drug offenders when they go in, I don't know what the number is for people going in on drug sentences, but I would imagine it is at least that high.

I have known drug traffickers who were not addicts. They

were businessmen.

But the majority of my practice as a public defender were people who were addicts, and they were serious addicts, and they were horrible addicts that could not function.

The research on heroin addiction has been startling to me.

People who are heroin addicts, their brains rewire so they feel that they, if they don't get heroin, they are going to die which is the larceny overs that you've heard about, which are the B and E's that you've heard about, which is the drug trafficking that we've heard about it.

So if you go in an addict, assuming some percentage of these mandatory minimum folks are, and you don't get treatment because you're in a high security facility and you don't step down to prerelease, they're being set up for failure.

I don't expect anyone to feel sympathy for someone serving a sentence, especially a violent drug trafficking case.

But it is demoralizing and is derailing in the prison system to have people sitting there based on weight, based solely on weight.

I see people that come in on rape cases, get parole, and go home.

People who come in on manslaughter cases get parole and go home.

And you sit there unable to access some programming and you know you're not going to get parole because you're barred from

getting parole.

The sadness that perpetuates this problem is really a serious problem.

People have nothing to lose that are this despondent, and many of them wish they could take programming, but it's not available to them.

The numbers may have changed, but the last time I saw the numbers in the Department, there are over 9000 names on waiting lists to access education, treatment, training, and job skills and reentry.

That's unconscionable.

You certainly can put your name on more than one list.

But at Susan Baronowski, the maximum security prison where I spend the majority of my liaison time, you can't even put your name on a list for programming until you have 18 months of your release.

So you come in a drug addict. You've got a ten year sentence. At eight and a half years, you can finally get on one of these lists that already has 9000 names on it.

We need to do more for people in custody to have them not be set up for failure.

Excuse me.

You've heard about the opportunities for parole.

And I just urge you not to just completely jump on the bandwagon.

There is decent research that shows parole, mandatory post release supervision is not beneficial to all people.

Low level offenders, I don't like that word, low level people being released sometimes become worse.

If they had a family to go to, if they had a home to go to, if they have a job to go to, then they had to go to see their parole officer all the time, or the parole officer showing up on their job.

It actually impedes their ability to do their job.

So please not a huge broad brush.

And if I were the decider, which I am not, I would prefer probationary supervision rather than parole, with no offense to the parole board, for the sole purpose of the due process rights that are awarded to people on probation.

If you're on parole and your parole officer sees you doing something wrong, you're in the back of the car, and you're at Walpole. No due process.

There is some after you're in, but you've already lost your job and perhaps your house, your housing. And it takes a long time to clear some of those things up.

On probation, you're entitled to public counsel if you're indigent. You're entitled to a hearing before a Judge. You're entitled to be heard on why you may have violated that probation.

So, again, with no offense to parole, I think they do a

terrific job, and by the way, those numbers are coming up, they were in terrible shape in 2011, but they're coming up slowly.

The tone of the board is terrific. People are feeling respected.

But, again, I would rather see probation I think unless the parole board built in some more due process requirements for violations.

A couple of quick points and I'll close.

I heard the average 40 arraignments that the DA has mentioned before people get to DOC custody on drug cases.

I would just ask you to look at those as 40 missed opportunities.

You heard from one former prisoner who said he wished someone up there made him go to drug treatment in one of his first arraignments.

I think imposed drug treatment doesn't work as well as not imposed drug treatment, but we all know that people are going to fail and relapse, and fail and relapse, and fail.

So the earlier on people get drug treatment along the way, the better off they'll be. And then they hopefully won't have any more arraignments.

And that's it.

JUDGE LU: All right.

MS. WALKER: I'll be happy to take any questions.

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         JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Walker.
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         Ouestions for Leslie Walker?
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         Secretary Bennett?
         MR. BENNETT: Good afternoon.
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         MS. WALKER: Hello.
         MR. BENNETT: Do you think it, at a minimum facility --
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         JUDGE LU: Mr. Secretary --
         MR. BENNETT: I, I apologize.
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         JUDGE LU: -- can you just pull that towards you?
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         MR. BENNETT: I apologize.
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         JUDGE LU: Thank you.
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         MR. BENNETT: Do you think at a minimum facility, someone
       who's on, got a long term minimum mandatory, if you put a
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       bracelet on them, that would be enough security so that they
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       wouldn't take off on you?
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         MS. WALKER: Yes.
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         MR. BENNETT: Okay.
         MS. WALKER: Yes. I think the bracelets are greatly
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       underutilized.
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         It's, it's a, although they are not without fault.
         I had one client who was released who was working in a
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       warehouse at night unloading boxes.
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         Even though the system knew exactly where he was, he was at
       his job, his bracelet kept going off.
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         He ended up getting fired because they found out that he
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1 was a parolee.

So they are not without problem.

And they are expensive. People have to pay to be on those bracelets.

But certainly, sitting, sitting anywhere when you could be working or trying to get a job and support your family, I would definitely agree.

MR. BENNETT: That was my question. Thank you.

JUDGE LU: All right.

Mr. Rosenthal?

MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes, thank you.

Leslie, one thing you said, and I've probably asked some dumb questions this morning, and this may be right up there, but about people who have both post release parole and post release probation, do you know, is it invariable that parole takes precedence if there's an alleged violence? Is that always the case?

MS. WALKER: It would depend on the violation.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay.

MS. WALKER: If it's a failure to pay, I think probation would be more inclined to try and work that out with someone.

I don't, I don't recall any parole officers violating someone for failure to pay a fee of any kind.

It tends to be for more, you know, community based actions, sometimes dirty urines, but that is also getting better under

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       the current administration.
         I think, I hate to be --
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: That's okay.
         MS. WALKER: -- closing, but.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: One, one other related question.
         Do you have any sense of how many people have had that,
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       both probation and parole upon being released to --
         MS. WALKER: I was afraid someone was going to ask me that.
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       And I don't re, know.
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         But my memory is, and please don't quote me on this, that
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       it's, it's pretty high, so that's, 30s or even 40 percent, but
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       I'm not positive about that fact.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: And, and you just deal with DOC. That, that
       would be a DOC experience, or are you talking about --
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         MS. WALKER: House of Correction as well.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry?
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         MS. WALKER: House of Correction as well.
         MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay. Yeah.
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         MS. WALKER: As far as I know.
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         Again, it's not my area of expertise.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay
         MS. WALKER: Can I just close by saying one thing?
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         With we, we will talk about the bad old days, Dan Conley
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       and I started the 1985 of the Boston Municipal Court, and it
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       wasn't so bad.
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We would talk about cases, we would form relationships. I would, could convince him that yes, in fact, the drugs weighed X but the person was Y, the person had a football scholarship to go to BC and didn't really need to do that time, and the person didn't do any time at all. It was supervised probation, and the person got their

college degree and succeeded.

So yes, it was, Judges were different. DAs were different.

But I would rather have my fate and that of my client's in the hands of a non-elected official, meaning a member of the judiciary, than an elected official who answers to the voters.

12 Thank you.

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JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Ms. Walker, and thank you to Prisoners Legal Services.

15 Have a good day.

All right. So, I'm sorry. Did I skip over somebody?

So sorry, my view was, must have been blocked. Do --

MR. ETTENBERG: Another question?

19 MR. BENNETT: You sure?

20 Dan Bennett.

21 It was Attorney --

22 JUDGE LU: Can I ask, hail you back. Sorry.

23 MS. WALKER: Certainly.

> MR. BENNETT: Attorney Ettenberg and I were pointing at each other because that's how we --

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         MS. WALKER: That's not polite.
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         MR. BENNETT: -- work together out in Worcester every day.
       We would have a discussion, and we would try to work things
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       out, and it wasn't because Mr. Early wasn't elected. It's just
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       because we had a good relationship, we could trust each other,
       and we, out in Worcester, everybody trusts everybody. That's
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       the way it is.
         So that was all.
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         MS. WALKER: Okay.
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         MR. BENNETT: So --
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         MS. WALKER: Well, I'm glad I came back.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay. All right. I guess there is no question
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       then.
         I think we have the Commissioner of Probation, Ed Dolan,
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       here. We must have a seat for him.
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: It's right here.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay.
         All right.
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Step on up.
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         JUDGE LU: Good afternoon, Mr., Mr. Dolan.
         Okay. So we'll hear now from Susan Williams.
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         All right. Good, good afternoon, Ms. Williams.
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         MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, afternoon, yeah.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. I'm going to ask you to please spell
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       your name for the stenographer, please,
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1 MS. WILLIAMS: Sure.

JUDGE LU:, and, and I have an acronym for your organization, if you could tell us what that is.

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. It's Susan, normal spelling, Williams, W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.

So I'm here by accident.

I cofounded a group called EMIT, End Mass Incarceration

Together, and it's state wide, ecumenical, grass roots, all

volunteer, based in Unitarian Universalism.

So I'm a volunteer.

And I started, before I started EMIT, I was, I still am a prison volunteer.

I go in with a non-religious program, 70 percent of all programs are religious, mine is not.

And last night, I sat in a circle at a minimum security prison with people who are incarcerated, and the Correctional Officer actually did something they do in Norway, he talked to them with respect like a human being in a minimum security prison.

All the prisons aren't like that. I've been in to about three or four regularly, and I've heard a lot of sad stories.

For example, and I look at the prison and the judicial system as a hungry monster who just wants to prey on poor people who don't have a lot of defenses or aren't able to find the resources to defend themselves, and they get swallowed up

in the job security of this huge system we've created.

And prisons don't want me to be here. I worry for my volunteer status that I'm here telling you what goes beyond, what goes on behind the closed doors.

So one guy told the story that he was on his second conviction, and he had served twice, and he was out on the streets.

He said I had a normal life, I had a bank account, I was getting married. And he was outside a strip club in Worcester waiting for a friend, the friend showed up, he was trying to convince his friend to do something, the friend said he wouldn't, and so this man took a gun, that he shouldn't have had, and he fired it into the air.

At that time, three off duty Worcester cops came out, arrested him, charged him, third strike. He served ten more years.

And when I hear stories and when I know the people behind the statistics, it just, it breaks my heart.

I don't know he maintains hope through the ten years and to start over again.

I've met people who said I didn't know nothing existed outside the ghetto. Prison is a set up for him. The programs help him.

And let me tell you, as someone who provides programs and goes in and offers programs, the prisons are not exactly

giving us a welcome mat. They make it difficult. They put up a lot of barriers for volunteers.

I'm giving them a free program. And there are a lot of barriers.

There's a guy who has been in for about 30 years. He committed a violent crime, and I think Mr. Benedetti said people can change in prison.

So we brought our program in after I waited for two years, asking the Director of Treatment, can we bring this program in, can we bring it in.

Finally, we get allowed in. I meet this man. He participated in our program in other prisons.

Within three weeks he was telling me what to do which is okay because he's taken responsibility in motivating other people.

He has a stack of certificates two inches thick. He changed. He changed, and he goes before the parole board and still gets a five year set back because he committed a violent crime because of Dominic Cinelli and the make of the parole board, like Leslie said hopefully there's a chance.

But what do we achieve by sending people to prison for so long when 92 percent are going to come out?

And some of them right from, right to the street, right from Souza right to the street.

And like Mary said, if we bury somebody for 15 years, they

can't even operate a cell phone or a computer.

How do we expect them not to reoffend? How do we expect them to have the resources?

So I have some, some more questions for you.

Well, I did go into Souza for about two years regularly, and one of the people there said it's where most of the world has given up on us, and most of us have given up on ourselves.

So I have some questions for you.

Why have we criminalized so much conduct in Massachusetts?

Why do we treat possession of a small amount of drugs and
make it a mandatory minimum, treat that equal to murder?

I can see mandatory minimum for murder, but for a tablespoon or two or three of drugs?

Why are we criminalizing that? Why are we making that a mandatory, why are drugs so special?

So I'm not sure if any of you have read the book, the New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander, and she makes a whole history of the failed war on drugs.

That's why I'm sitting here today. As somebody in my
Unitarian Church said, I had to read it, and that's what
motivates a lot of us here who are, who have come to testify
and given up our day.

So why are DAs the only ones who testified today in favor of mandatory minimums?

I think it's for job security. I think they need it as a

1 tool. It, it, it gives them the discretion, not the Judges. Have mandatory minimums resulted in more or less overdoses? 2 3 Have mandatory minimums reduced drug trafficking in Massachusetts? 4 5 Has the threat of punishment prevented the drug trade? Has 6 it been a deterrent? I wish the answer to that one was yes. 7 8 Why do we have the opiate crisis even though we also have 9 mandatory minimums? 10 What do longer, harsher sentences achieve? 11 Why can't we trust the Judges to use their discretion? The DA said they used their discretion, but I don't know if 12 13 I was the only one who noticed all the DAs were white guys, 14 and the majority, disproportionate, in prison are blacks and 15 Latinos who suffer, and they're often poor, or as Leslie said, 16 drug addicted. 17 So also ask the question why are churches and faith community, communities represented here? 18 19 And for me, on page three of your handout, it says you're 20 charged to punish the offender justly, so we're here to ask 21 for justice on the 22,000 people who can't be here, and that 22 you can bring justice by making the sentences shorter. Give 23 people a chance. Give people a chance that they can leave 24 prison and, and start a life over.

So I urge you to follow your charge to ensure that justice,

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especially for the mothers, especially for the women who, just even serving a small amount of time, disrupts their whole lives, it disrupts their children's lives, it makes them have a higher likelihood they'll go to prison and end up in the system, they lose their housing.

So I urge you to end this crazy law of mandatory minimums.

And also, the threshold of a felony? It's from 1986. I mean that's crazy.

So I urge you to recommend this to the House of Representatives and the Senate that we eliminate those two, increase the felony to a reasonable amount, and that we eliminate mandatory minimums for this crazy special crime of drugs.

And I ask you to punish the offenders justly.

That's it.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Williams.

Ouestions for Ms. Williams from the Commission?

Okay. Thank you so much, and, and thank you to End Mass Incarceration Together for your comments.

Thank you.

All right. I think I'm going to, I think we should probably take the 30 minute lunch break at this time.

So the, the people remaining, the next person up is Ben Forman of Mass Inc. just to, kind of give you an idea of where we're at.

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         So we're going to take a 30 minute break --
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Yes.
         JUDGE LU: -- I guess.
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Sounds good.
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         JUDGE LU: Thank you everybody.
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                      (Commission Recessed at 1:11 p.m.)
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         JUDGE LU: Okay. We're going to start up again. This is the
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afternoon session of a public hearing on November 18th.

We're joined now by Judges Paul McManus and Judge Catherine

Byrne.

Judge McManus is from, well, both from, I believe, the

Judge McManus is from, well, both from, I believe, the Boston Municipal Court. I should know that.

But the, so we welcome them.

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And we had most of the other folks, we, I think they may be someone in the hall on an urgent phone call that will be joining us.

So I'm going to call at this time Ben Forman from Mass Inc.

MR. FORMAN: Good afternoon, Judge Lu, and Members of the Commission.

I thank you for this opportunity to testify.

JUDGE LU: Good afternoon.

Can you spell your name for the stenographer, please?

MR. FORMAN: Yes. Ben, B-E-N, Forman, F-O-R-M-A-N.

And I am the research director at Mass Inc., and I'm testifying this morning on behalf of Mass Inc., as well as the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Reform Coalition which is chaired by Wayne Budd, Kevin Burke, and Max Stern, and it's staffed by Mass Inc.

And as you may know, the coalition has viewed the reestablishment of the Sentencing Commission as a crucial first step towards comprehensive criminal justice reform.

We see the Commission as uniquely positioned to examine the

data and draw attention to opportunities to improve our justice system.

So we allocate resources more cost effectively and increase public safety.

We also see this Sentencing Commission as an important bone work to ensure that our system administers justice fairly and free from racial and ethnic bias.

And I just want to underscore that particular point.

Particularly if the Kelso State Governments does not have it in its mandate here to look at racial and ethnic disparities as it's had in other states where it's operating, including where, Rhode Island where it has just started to work.

If racial and ethnic disparities aren't part of its charge here, the Commission really is the last man standing in that sense to look at our data and really figure out if our, our justice system has, has issues that we should make it a priority to address.

And we certainly see some concerning things in our varying incarceration rates as well as some of the patterns in bail that we've looked at most recently.

The Sentencing Commission's excellent data has been a real resource to us over the years.

In our, in our report in 2013, we saw that nearly two thirds of drug offenders and, and 60 percent of non-drug

offenders were ineligible for parole essentially or had very little incentive to obtain it.

In your most recent numbers, we've seen it's actually gone up from 2011, it was two thirds of drug offenders. It's not three quarters of drug offenders in the, in the most recent data, and still about 60 percent of non-drug offenders have no ability or limited incentive to obtain parole.

And I, I recognize that's been an issue that's been raised this morning, and it's always an issue the Commission has drawn attention to as problematic.

It's our hope that the, the guidelines and recommendations the Commission issues will finally resolve this problem and move Massachusetts so it's no longer among the lowest performing states in terms of letting people out on supervised release.

In addition to unsupervised release, we, at Mass Inc. draw attention to the increasing time served in Massachusetts, and the --

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: What was the last thing you said? The increasing?

MR. FORMAN: Length of time served.

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Time served.

MR. FORMAN: Another issue that's come up this morning.

JUDGE LU: The, the microphones are, aren't that sensitive, so I know he can hear it, but the members of the audience

might not be able to unless you pull it up.

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Okay. I'm sorry.

JUDGE LU: Yeah.

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Okay.

MR. FORMAN: So, and we think time served as increased by about a third since the '90s, and, and we all know that's then diverting resources away from rehabilitative programs, treatment, and reentry.

And recidivism has arised to the point where the majority of people we release will reoffend, creating new victims and requiring more resources for us.

So we're hopeful that the Commission will be able to create a road map for better understanding how time served has increased where we can bring down the prison populations and reinvest our resources in those things.

So lastly, I just want to call attention to the role we hope the Commission can play in improving our state's criminal justice data infrastructure.

It's now almost 2016, and we're still looking at sentencing data from 2013.

That, that kind of lag is really problematic, especially with today's database technologies where we should really have data for researchers and policy makers that are basically real time.

And, and in terms of understanding the time served, that's

been a real problem for us and I'm sure it's a problem for the Commission.

If you don't know how people, long people are ultimately staying, it's really hard to judge whether the sentences are, are fair and efficient.

And, and just one, one last things in terms of our data needs, more data on race and ethnicity, on female offenders, and particularly on young adults in our corrections systems, special populations that researchers have really called attention to is not being served particularly well, but, but yet we really lack fundamental data to understand their trajectories in our system and how we're serving them.

So I want to be brief. Those are just my thoughts and I'll submit some written testimony as well.

We, we appreciate that all of the above presents some formidable challenges.

Mass Inc. is more than willing to do anything we can to be of assistance to the Commission.

We certainly appreciate that your deliberations needs to be done privately, but if there's any indication of problems that you're facing, that you can help us understand, we'll do all that we can to help provide you with analysis of information.

So thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

And for your service to the Commonwealth.

JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Mr. Forman.

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Do we have questions for Ben Forman from the, from Mass
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       Inc. and the from the Mass Criminal Justice Reform Coalition?
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Thank you very much.
         JUDGE LU: Okay.
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         MR. FORMAN: Thank you.
         JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Forman. Have a good day.
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         Thank you.
         JUDGE LU: Okay. So next is Christine Pratt.
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         MS. POFF: Poff.
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         JUDGE LU: I'm sorry.
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         MS. POFF: Don't worry.
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         JUDGE LU: Put? How,
         MS. POFF: It's P-O-F-F, Poff.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay.
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         MS. POFF: Yeah. It's a funny name.
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         JUDGE LU: Sorry about that. It's spelled wrong on this
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       sheet --
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         MS. POFF: No, no, I'm used to it.
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         JUDGE LU: -- in front of me.
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         MS. POFF: Yeah.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. Good afternoon, Ms. Poff.
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         MS. POFF: Okay.
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         JUDGE LU: And would you please even spell your name again
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       for --
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         MS. POFF: Sure.
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JUDGE LU: -- the stenographer, please?

MS. POFF: Yeah. It's Christine spelled the traditional way, C-H-R and Poff, P as in Peter-O, two Fs as in Frank.

JUDGE LU: Okay. All right. Good morning, and welcome.

MS. POFF: Thank you so much for this opportunity.

My name is Christine Poff. And I'm a social worker, and I'm here representing the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers which has 7500 members across the Commonwealth, many of whom work in the criminal justice system on the front lines of, in communities and in prisons, working with individuals who are involved in the judicial system.

We also have a very active criminal justice shared interest group we call it our 100 members who work very hard on criminal justice policies that will improve lives for their clients as well as improve our communities and benefit them.

I, I want to thank you so much for, for being here. This is new to us.

We've been used to advocating for bills at the State House, you know, in the, in the legislature, and this is an exciting opportunity to work on sentencing changes also or to advocate for them.

So we really appreciate, I understand that it's a fairly newly convened Commission in the last few years, and that there hasn't been a hearing for a long time.

So thank you so much for being here and giving us this opportunity.

I, as, social workers, I don't have data like the men from Mass Inc., but we have hundreds of stories that we hear all of the time from our members who are working with individuals.

And I'm here primarily to push very hard for no mandatory minimums.

It's clear that that has disrupted families, disrupted communities, really kept people in jail for way too long and very unable to rebuild their lives when they come out of prison with the extent of sentences for very low risk, especially drug offenses obviously.

We support, and we also have been very involved in the last year working with a group of parents of caretakers, of family members, who are at, who were in jail and not violent offenders, who are advocating for community based sentencing alternatives for nonviolent caretakers, whether that's parents, mothers who are separated from their children, or people taking care of elderly or disabled family members.

And really trying to look at the situations and giving

Judges the discretion to do that and lawyers to advocate that

for their, for their clients.

In addition to our, in addition to our sentencing things, and I'm not quite, this is why this is new for us. I'm not sure how much involvement you, you, or power you have over

this.

But we have wanted to reduce low level felonies and make them mis, misdemeanors, especially for young people.

We are interested in ending collateral sanctions imposed by the Registry of Motor Vehicles for charges unrelation, unrelated to the operation of a motor vehicle.

We'd like jurors, judicial discretion to transfer permanently incapacitated or terminally ill patients, get them out of prison for treatment, and to be reunited with families.

And to reform the bail system to eliminate the large financial disparities for individuals who are low income and can't afford bail for very, for nonviolent arrests, pretrial detention, you know, eliminating pretrial detention for those individuals.

And then the last thing, I just would like to share my, why I got very involved in this issue, in these issues, is that many years ago, I lived in New York City, and I worked at Riker's Island as a social worker.

And I worked with, with men and women who were incarcerated and in prerelease programs, waiting to be reunited with their families.

And I did a lot of work on family dynamics and how to reconnect with your children and how to reconnect with family members who would be supportive when you got out of jail.

And hands down, the incarcerated men and women that I

worked with, some of them have been in jail for a very long time, some for maybe only a year, they were petrified.

They were so worried and anxious about this, and wanted it to go so well.

And they were, it was just, they were so human, and it was a really important experience for me because I'd never worked with people who were incarcerated and been in that kind of situation, and I had social work training and had training in family systems, and was a compassionate individual and really worked with them to help learn some skills to reunite and be supportive and not let some of the, the stress, posttraumatic stress that they were going to take with them back into the community interfere.

And we did a little bit of work with them when they got out of prison, and it was, it was so difficult, and the longer they'd been in prison, the more difficult it was and the more likely they were to be recidivists and the less likely they were to have successful reunions with family members who could be supportive and really provide them with some of the strength that they needed to do well outside.

So it was so clear to me that the long sentences didn't work.

And any kind of helping people rehabilitate, get back into the community, support their families, be involved with their families, be good parents, good, good wives, good husbands,

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       good children to older parents.
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         So I just urge you to eliminate those mandatory minimums
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       and work to reduce sentences because it's not the way to help
       build our communities.
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         Thank you so much.
         JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Poff.
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         One, just one second.
         MS. POFF: Sure.
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         JUDGE LU: So sorry.
         Are there questions for Ms. Poff from the National
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       Association of Social Workers Massachusetts Chapter?
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         Okay. Thank you.
         MS. POFF: We've been here a long time.
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         Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: Thank you --
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay. I'm going to ask Kimeshia Brown, please,
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       from EPOCA to come forward.
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         MS. BROWN: I'm sorry.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. Good afternoon, Ms. Brown.
         MS. BROWN: Good afternoon.
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         JUDGE LU: Please spell your name for the stenographer,
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       please.
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         MS. BROWN: My name is Kimeshia Brown, K-I-M-E-S-H-I-A.
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         I'm here representing EPOCA, Ex-Prisoners Organizing for
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Community Action.

Well, I'd like to speak about the mandatory minimum bill.

The testimony I'm about to provide is not about, well, I have testimony for myself too, but the most important one that I've faced was my aunt being deported as her boyfriend was having, doing all type of stuff, and they, he got caught in a drug string, and her home was one of the homes that they went to. And even though they found no drugs in her home, she got caught along with a, a few other gentlemen and she, she was charged with the same charges that they received, and because she didn't have, she was working, she worked for 15 years in the hotel, she didn't have any street knowledge, any legal knowledge, she was just arrested. She never saw soil in America again.

She got ten years. She didn't have anyone to snitch on, anything to say, so she just had to take the time.

She got ten years and then deported.

She had four kids that left the family to take care of these four children.

They, they didn't see their mother again outside of a prison cell until four years later, I mean ten years later when they went to visit her in Jamaica.

This person had no criminal background, no criminal intent whatsoever. And it's, it's just one that touched me because her kids have to suffer now without a mother. They have family

but no love is like your mother's love just because of, she was involved with someone else.

And, you know, there's, the stories are endless. Like what I've known and what I've been through and with the fair sentencing being unfair.

I was actually, I'm not sure if I'm jumping off topic.

But I was, my first arrest that I, I received was me trying to obtain a Social Security card, and I was actually charged.

I was charged wrongfully, and when the, when, when I took it to trial and it, it came out that the charges were dismissed because I wasn't guilty, the Judge got mad and I received a 30 day plus a year's probation sentencing for a disorderly conduct.

I mean the stories are endless, but I just think that I, I just thought that I should come and let the panel know that this, this is real.

Like I went back to school to become a paralegal. I am a paralegal now. But I have to wait to clear charges on my record. I had, I, that's why I'm working, doing this work that I'm doing with EPOCA because I have to, I have to bust my butt.

Not only do I have three children to provide for, but I have to show society that I can do it, I can become a lawyer. That's my long life dream.

And because of the stigmas that have been placed on my life

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       because of maybe prejudice, I don't know what it is, I'm just
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       like stuck in an area right now that I'm trying to get out of.
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         So I just wanted to ask if you guys could just, you know,
       just make this happen for a lot of family.
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         I think America will be better if we set up a reform system
       and not just lock, throw people away basically because it
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       weighs a lot on your self-esteem.
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         You get depressed. You can't, it's hard to come out of
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       depression. It's just a very hard thing to do.
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         I just wanted you guys to know that.
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         JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Brown.
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         Ouestions for Ms. Brown?
         MS. BROWN: Okay.
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         JUDGE LU: All right.
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         MS. BROWN: Thank you.
         JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Brown, and thank you to the Ex-
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       Prisoners Organizing for Community Action.
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         All right. So I'm going to call now on Barb Dougan or, and
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       Robert Harnais and Rahsaan Hall and, I'm reading somebody
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       else's handwriting here. I apologize. Maryanne Frangules.
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         MS. FRANGULES: That's good.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. I'm using my ESP to thank Kevin that
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       that has folders for everybody, because it looks like it has a
       whole bunch of folders. Maybe you want to pass them up?
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Or maybe they don't want the interruption of our attention.

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I don't know.
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         All right. So welcome everybody. Good afternoon.
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         MR. HALL: Good afternoon.
         JUDGE LU: All right. So I'm going to ask, probably most of
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       the people here, I, I have some familiarity with most of you.
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         We're going to ask you to state your name and then spell
       your name for the stenographer.
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         We have a high tech, well, fairly high tech stenographer
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       system here.
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         So I guess we'll just start at my right, at, and your left.
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         MS. DOUGAN: Great. Thank you. Barbara, B-A-R-B-A-R-A,
       Dougan. I spell that the Scotch Presbyterian way. D-O-U-G-A-N.
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         JUDGE LU: Thank you. Good morning, good afternoon.
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         MS. DOUGAN: Do you want to have everybody do their names
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       first?
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         JUDGE LU: Yes, please. Yes, please.
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         MR. HARNAIS: Good afternoon. Bob Harnais, H-A-R-N-A-I-S.
         JUDGE LU: Good afternoon.
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         MR. HALL: Good afternoon. Rahsaan Hall, R-A-H-S-A-A-N,
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       Hall, H-A-L-L.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. Good afternoon.
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         MS. FRANGULES: Maryanne Frangules, and that's M-A-R-Y A-N-
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       N-E, last name is F-R-A-N-G-U-L-E-S.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. So good afternoon, Ms. Dougan, and Mr.
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       Harnais, and Mr. Hall, and Ms. Frangules.
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All right. So, and what, you folks are welcome to talk in some order.

MS. DOUGAN: Great. Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Go ahead.

MS. DOUGAN: Good afternoon. We are absolutely delighted to be here, and would only suggest that let's do this more often than every 20 years.

We're delighted to see the full Commission here.

My name is Barb Dougan, and I run the Massachusetts office of a group called Families Against Mandatory Minimums or FAMM, as we're known.

We are, work on Massachusetts drug sentencing laws and have a membership of over 2500 families of prisoners, prisoners, and other interested folks.

I'd like to start out with a disclaimer.

We are not a drug policy organization per say. We do not weigh in on either decriminalization of drugs, or legalization of drugs. We don't take a position.

Instead, our position is I think both modest and common sense, which is that if certain conduct is prohibited by law, then the sentence should fit the crime.

As you see, we have a, several things for you in terms of our written materials, but I just wanted to cover in my brief time two points.

FAMM has been active in Massachusetts since about 2007. I'm

not even going to try and compete with Marty Rosenthal.

But every legislative session, we come before the Judiciary Committee of the legislature to testify in support of repealing mandatory minimum sentences for drugs.

Each time we ask for repeal and each time certain things are the same.

For instance, these laws have been in place now for, now over 30 years with very little to show for them except extraordinary cost to tax payers.

Another thing's the same is that nonviolent drug offenders are still spending disproportionately long time in prison compared to other crimes.

And one of our handouts for you compares some of the sentences for other offenses.

Reentry continues to be difficult, and perhaps increasingly so with the job market, and recidivism rates not only remain high but continue to climb.

There is one major difference in the last year or so which others have referenced, and that is the full blown opiate crisis that we're in the midst of.

Some would argue that that's a reason to maintain mandatory minimums. I would argue that it's exactly the reason why we need to get rid of them.

We can no longer ignore the fact that mandatory minimums prevent the Courts from sending a drug offender to prison if

they're facing a mandatory minimum.

When lives are at stake it's an unconscionable policy, and it certainly should not be maintained.

There's many other alternatives to incarceration that would hold people accountable for their offenses but also allow them to get the services they need if they have a drug, a substance abuse problem.

And even if they don't, to perhaps have shorter sentences that is more commensurate to what their role was in the offense.

We also have to, to recognize who we're talking about.

You know, the old narrative was false. The old narrative was drug addict, drug addicts are bad people and we need to put them away.

And, you know, for the most part, we have moved beyond that and we recognize that it's simply not true.

But the new narrative is, is also false, the new narrative is you've got the drug addicts on this side of the room, and they need help, let's get them help.

But on this side of the room are the people who are the distributors or the traffickers, and none of them have a drug problem and let's lock them up for a long time.

And, and there's other people in this room who are much better in terms of their front line work their doing like Maryanne Frangules, but that's simply not true.

We hear it from our members all the time.

In our folder, I, we've included testimony from the group

Learn to Cope which many of you may be familiar with who are

on side on this issue, and their testimony is terrific and was

written by a former prosecutor that I think is really, really

gets to the heart of the issue.

So we're not going to be able to reduce the demand for drugs which fuels an entire industry if we refuse to offer drug offenders the chance to overcome their addiction.

We're not saying everybody who's serving a mandatory minimum is a drug addict, but many people, it's an overlap between those two groups, between the addicts and the folks who sell to support their addictions, and to the extent that we keep ignoring that overlap, we are not going to make much progress on this.

The second issue is, and this is obviously the perfect forum to raise it in, which is how mandatory minimums are actually used, and whether there's any legitimate sentencing goal when we use them.

And what I'm referring to here is how prosecutors use the threat of either a, of a long mandatory minimum or a longer mandatory minimum to induce guilty pleas.

I would suggest that anyone here who works in a, a criminal justice setting in Massachusetts knows that this happens and the, across the Commonwealth. And we have, Rahsaan Hall can

talk more about that.

You know, our sentencing policies are supposed to kick in after a defendant has been convicted, but with mandatory minimums, we have them being used in order to help prosecutors get their convictions.

And we'd suggest that that is simply not a legitimate use of our sentencing policies in Massachusetts.

Chapter 211E also talks about what sentencing policies should be attempting to, to achieve.

One is re, promote respect for the law.

When you look at the egregious racial disparities and who gets mandatory minimums, that is undermining respect for the law in many communities.

Mandatory minimums are, are, sentencing policy in general are supposed to promote just punishment for an offense, but when we have laws that are based literally on the weight of the evidence and not the defendant's conduct, then it's inevitable that we will have unjust results.

Sentencing policy is supposed to protect the public from further crimes of the defendant.

And as we just stated, when people are not allowed to get drug treatment if that's an issue for them, then we are utterly failing in that aspect.

Another, one of the things it also says in that statute is that it's supposed to, our sentencing policies are supposed to

ration correctional capacity.

Among your materials, we have the testimony of a woman who could not join us here today, but her name is Bonnie DiToro, a mother of two, who was sentenced to a 15 year mandatory minimum sentence for being in the next room when a drug deal went down.

I doubt that anyone in this room would suggest that that is a rational use of our correctional resources to put someone like that away for 15 years.

Finally, one of the policies that's supposed to be achieved is to provide certainty in sentencing.

And ironically, this is often held up by the District Attorneys as a justification for mandatory minimums.

But when most cases are settled, these are deals that are cut behind closed doors.

The District Attorneys say that, well, if there's a problem, we're going to hear about it from the public, and then every six years they can throw us out of office.

These are, the public has no idea who's getting a break and who isn't, so these are not actions that are being taken in public, like that happens in a courtroom.

These are happening behind closed doors, and they're in fact, by the mere, by the virtue of there being plea bargains, that has already gotten rid of your consistency, and we don't know who gets a deal and who doesn't.

1 So just in closing when you issue your recommendations, we 2 urge you to include the repeal for mandatory minimums. 3 The time is long overdue for Massachusetts to join the nationwide movement for more effective and fiscally 4 5 responsible drug sentencing laws, a goal that is now 6 increasingly supported across the political spectrum. 7 Thank you very much. 8 JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Dougan. 9 Attorney Harnais who I believe is also the President of the Massachusetts Bar Association. 10 11 MR. HARNAIS: Yes. Good afternoon. 12 JUDGE LU: Okay. 13 MR. HARNAIS: Mr. Chairman and through you, Members of the board. 14 15 My name is Bob Harnais. I'm the President of the Massachusetts Bar Association. 16 Apart from that role of being president of the 17 Massachusetts Bar Association, I will tell the, the committee 18 19 here that I, I'm a practicing attorney, been practicing for 26 20 years.

I worked in the District Courts, both in the Clerk's Office and as a Probation Officer, and I'm also the General Counsel to a Sheriff's Department as we speak right now.

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So I'm kind of familiar with the, the sentencing both as an attorney, both as working the sheriff's department.

But going back to the purpose I'm here, the Massachusetts

Bar Association is a long standing commitment to ensuring that

the most fair and effective criminal justice system possible

that we have in this state.

The MBA supports an elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for drug related crimes.

You know, especially today when we're talking about the opiate issues out there, I'm going to deviate from this script because I think you have, you, everybody here has this script, so I'm going to talk from what I really know here.

We have a system out there right now that puts mandatory sentence, mandatory sentencing in effect.

What you're actually doing, and I know there's, there's a cry out that the MBA doesn't want people put in jail, or agency doesn't want people in jail.

That's not valid.

The problem you have with mandatory sentences is at the very end.

What happens to a person that gets sentenced to two years in the House of Correction, ten years in, in state prison?

What happens on their last day? They walk out the door.

If the committee and the legislature is concerned for the safety of the communities, walking someone out the door the last day of their sentence is not the right thing to do.

It's not the right thing to for the community. It's not the

right thing to do to, for them.

I myself have toured a lot of state prisons being the general counsel of a jail.

I've also toured state prisons in other, in other states.

The problem you have is you have someone serving ten years. You have someone that's served ten years in, say, let's just say Walpole, let's just say Concord.

They live in that atmosphere, they live in that world because they got their ten year mandatory.

Ten year comes and a day, what are they doing? They're walking out the door.

Now, ask yourselves this. Do you feel comfortable with that, for that person to walk out that door on that day? Do you feel comfortable that person didn't assimilate back into the public or the community as they should have?

And that's what you have to ask yourself.

If you're concerned with regards to the community safety, what are we doing about people that serve mandatory sentences and walking out of the door?

Is it fair to them? Is it fair to the community?

I suggest after reviewing the facts and looking at all the numbers, you're going to see there isn't a, a process for them to earn their way to the street.

Sheriff's Department says, we all know, have changed their focus on reentry. Why did they do that? Because history has

shown us that the system we have now with the mandatory sentence, other than the idea of just putting people in jail because they committed a crime, other than doing that, it doesn't do anything to rehabilitate the person back into society.

Sheriffs are aware of that, so that's why they changed their focus.

All I ask people to do and the MBA ask, if you're thinking of mandatory sentences, think of what goes on at the very end of those sentences, think what you're doing, think what you're doing for the communities, think what you're doing for the individual.

Punishment is an aspect of this system, but rehabilitation has to be better, a better way.

And I'll tell you one thing. You think about the number of people that actually serve time for life, very limited.

So that means the day they walk into jail is the first day of them getting, process of getting out, whether it's a mandatory sentence or not.

And if you have a mandatory sentence, they get out that one day.

And they didn't have to earn their way out. They didn't have to earn a possibility of gaining good time and getting out early. They got out that day.

Now, when you apply, also the numbers will show the,

there's, it's very, it doesn't seem to be fair to certain
communities.

You may not know it, but I'm, I used to be the President of the Hispanic Bar Association, and I also was President of the National Northeast, and I see a high proportionate of Hispanics being sentenced to mandatory sentences.

Why it's happening, I don't know. But there's seems to be an extraordinary, extraordinarily high number.

So other than, you have my speech in front of you, so I don't have to read it.

I think everybody can read what, what my submission is.

I ask you to look at mandatory sentences, and look at what it's really about.

It was about punishment.

Everything in life has its time. Everything in life, at a certain point when it's developed, it has a reason.

We have right now a society that's suffering from opiates.

We have an, and personally I can tell this committee myself I know from personal point of view.

We have a society suffering from opiates, so we have to start looking and thinking out of the box.

Putting people in jail, although it's a great theory, and
I'm going to tell you right now there's going to be many
people out there that say that's right, people should go to
jail, they don't deal with what you deal with every day. They

don't see.

They just see every, newspaper articles.

Public policy cannot set, I'm sorry. Public policy cannot be set by the fact that people out there want certain things.

You are the professionals. You're the ones to decide. You give the recommendations.

Look at what you have here. Look how it hasn't worked.

If mandatory sentences worked, people have the ability to do something. It hasn't worked. The numbers out there show it.

The one thing that troubles me a great deal as an attorney, as an advocate of the Constitution, when it's used as a prosecutorial tool.

I sat before a committee just like this recently, where a District Attorney did state that they decided when a mandatory sentence should be imposed, and they use intel they get from the street.

Now, if you think about that, they're deciding what punish should go, not by what they can prove, but by the intel that they hear from their people on the street.

There's a slight little problem with that. It's unconstitutional.

So when you have someone admit to a committee that we use the intel on the street to decide whether we're going to waive, we're going to drop the charges to lesser mandatory sentences, that is unconstitutional.

And I question why it's being used because it's a tool for prosecution reasons, not to help society, not to help the communities, not to help the individual.

It's because, you know what, the public out there likes me for what I do.

And that's not the reason why we punish people or that's not what we should do for society.

So as the MBA, President of the MBA, I will say we're against mandatory sentences because I, my kids go to school to learn history.

And if anything should tell you something, and it's in his history, they don't work. We wouldn't be in this situation. You wouldn't be sitting here as a committee questioning mandatory, what mandatory sent, if they're working, nobody would touch it.

Obviously it's not working. It's time to think out of the box, and it's time to think about what's happening and who's getting hurt by it.

So on behalf of the MBA, we'd ask that you recommend that there be no mandatory sentences.

JUDGE LU: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Harnais.

Mr. Hall, whenever you're ready.

MR. HALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and to the Members of the Commission.

Again, I'm Rahsaan Hall. I'm the Director of the Racial

Justice Program for the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

I served as a prosecutor here in the Commonwealth in Suffolk County in the DA's office, and my tenure began in 2000 under then District Attorney Ralph Martin, and continued until 2008 under the current District Attorney for Suffolk County, Daniel Conley.

I began as an Assistant District Attorney in the Dorchester District Courts where I served there for three years, and then was promoted to the Safe Neighborhood Initiative Unit where I was responsible for prosecuting matters out of the Uphams Corner section of Dorchester and then onto the senior trial team where I handled gang and homicide matters.

In my role as a prosecutor for the Uphams Corner Safe
Neighborhood Initiative, I handled a wide variety of cases,
but I was also responsible for helping to set a coordinated
public safety agenda for the members and stakeholders of the
Uphams Corner community.

And in that work, I have been to several community meetings and community gatherings and different organizational meetings to discuss what the public safety concerns were for each of those organizations.

And I heard a broad array of concerns ranging from people speeding to illegally dumping trash to the violence in their streets and prostitution, and, yes, even drug distribution.

But what I also heard was people raising concerns about the one size fits all nature of mandatory minimum drug sentences.

Rarely did I encounter individuals that heralded that approach, and said this is the right way to go to address the issues and concerns that we have here in our community.

As a prosecutor, I always charged the mandatory minimum sentence if it was available. Always.

I did that because it gave me the leverage.

I had a very powerful bargaining chip.

Defendants were more likely to plead guilty to a lesser sentence that I as the prosecutor recommended if I was willing to dismiss the minimum mandatory charge.

And as Mr. Harnais said, I received information from my partners in the Police Department and intelligence that had been gathered through investigations that we had conducted into other matters as to who was really deserving of a mandatory minimum sentence and who was really deserving for a reduction in that sentence by dismissing the minimum mandatory charge, not necessarily for the crime that was before me, but for the intel that I had on those individuals.

And so in this context of discussing mandatory minimum sentences, I know there have been several District Attorneys who have talked about and lauded this notion of prosecutorial discretion.

But I have to say that in this context, prosecutorial

discretion is a misnomer because it suggests that the use of discretion prevents the rigid implementation of harsh sentences for low level drug offenders and nonviolent offenders.

A perfect example comes from here in Massachusetts with the recent efforts to, or excuse me, associated with the Annie Dookhan drug lab scandal.

There was an effort by prosecutors here in Massachusetts to try to prevent individuals who were the victims of that drug scandal to receive due process.

Most of the thousands of victims of her scandal had already served their sentences.

But for years, several of the prosecutors argued that these, if these defendants tried to challenge their convictions, then the prosecution would bring back any number of the harsher penalties including the mandatory minimum sentences.

Fortunately, the SJC unanimously rejected that argument this May in the <u>Bridgeman vs. the District Attorney for</u>

<u>Suffolk County</u> which the ACLU, along with the law firm of Foley Hoag and CPCS litigated.

And the Court wrote in using mandatory minimums to threaten harsher outcomes than were obtained before Dookhan's misconduct went public, prosecutors were arguing that they could benefit from Dookhan's misconduct.

The power of the prosecutors to prosecute and impose sentences shifts the balance of power in the judicial system by taking it away from jurists who have been charged to faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all their duties according to the best of their abilities and understandings agreeably to the rule and regulation of the constitution and the laws of this Commonwealth.

And this shift in the balance has resulted in an increased prison population with little to no impact on recidivism for drug offenders, gross racial in, disparities in drug sentencing.

And so for the eight years that I served as a prosecutor, I worked in overwhelmingly, communities that were overwhelming concentrated with people of color.

And in all of the drug offenses that I prosecuted, black and Latinos made up a majority of the cases of people who were ensnared within the criminal justice system.

And for the years that I served as a prosecutor, 90 percent of the drug cases that I prosecuted, 90 percent or more, were all of people of color.

And despite the fact that I was working in the city of Boston and prosecuting cases out of the city of Boston where people of color only make up 53 percent of the city's population, 90 percent of the drug cases that were prosecuted, at least in my experience, were people of color.

That is a disparity that defies a reasonable explanation, especially when there's no reliable empirical data that suggests blacks and Latinos use drugs any more frequently than whites.

And so despite the spirit behind these mandatory minimum drug laws, there's nothing in my work as a prosecutor that suggests these laws had a deterrent effect.

For every individual that I prosecuted, there was someone else to be prosecuted.

For every drug sweep that I prosecuted, there was another sweep to be performed.

Yet the criminal conduct that led to these sweeps in the first place never changed.

And as a result, the people that I worked with in the community raised concerns about the nature of these drug sweeps and the nature of the sentences that some of the people who were caught up in those drug sweep, sweeps received.

And so now it's time for a smarter sentencing policy, one that deals with this issue as a public health issue as opposed to a criminal justice issue.

It's time for a smarter sentencing policy that looks at this scorched earth approach and says it doesn't work because it further exacerbates racial and economic disparities.

It's time for a sentencing disparity that entrusts the judiciary to faithfully administer not only punishment but

justice in the truest and fullest sense of the word.

It's time to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences related to drug offenses.

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, Mr. Hall.

Ms. Frangules, whenever you're ready.

MS. FRANGULES: Yes, please.

My name is Maryanne Frangules.

As you know, I am the Executive Director of MOAR which is a statewide association of people in recovery, families and friends who are educating the public about the value of living in recovery.

I too am in long term recovery, which means that I haven't had a drink or a drug since 1981, and that gives me the energy to do my job, so that's a good thing.

But for today, we really want to emphasize that we'd like to see the mandatory minimums as is repealed.

You've heard the testimony from everyone here, and I would like to add to that that I see people who have been institutionalized through the prison system because they vegetate there, and they, you come out, you don't know another way to live.

What we do see that has hope and promise is Drug Courts which have accountability connected to it, which, and the other piece is rehab, recovery coaching.

And an example of an alternative sentencing program that is supported by this state is the Reflections Court Alternative Program that's down in the, New Bedford.

It provides 90 days of residential treatment, and 90, nine months of community based case management, and at the end of the second quarter of 2015, the completion rate of the resident, residential portion was 61.45 percent, and of the year long problem, the completion rate was 61.3 percent.

Clients who didn't complete the full year who are in violation of probation, it's next determined by probation whether or not they are returned to incarceration or allowed to pursue further treatment.

There have been very few clients who have reoffended and picked up new charges.

All clients received education and gained knowledge and coping skills, and this is assistance to lead a life void of criminal behave, criminal behavior.

And that's through high point treatment, and it is supported by the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services.

So that's an example of a way to cope without dope, and it gives you hope.

Thank you.

JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Ms. Frangules.

Do we have questions for Ms. Dougan or Mr. Harnais or Mr. Hall or Ms. Franqules?

1 Dean Mazzone from the Attorney General's Office. MR. MAZZONE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. 2 Mr. Harnais, two if I may. 3 MR. HARNAIS: Sure. 4 5 MR. MAZZONE: And I don't want to monopolize you. Number one, and Mr., Mr. Hall kind of talked about it as 6 well, so maybe one or both of you can help, is the issue about 7 8 intelligence of the mandatory minimums and un, what the DA's, 9 doing, are unconstitutional. MR. HARNAIS: Okay. 10 11 I was just unclear as to what exactly you were just saying. MR. HARNAIS: They're, they're seeking a punishment not 12 13 based on necessarily, they see someone that, two different 14 people same charge, okay. They're going to seek mandatory minimum on one and not the 15 16 other. 17 Why --MR. MAZZONE: Because intelligence they know has tagged on. 18 19 MR. HARNAIS: Because of things they can't prove --20 MR. MAZZONE: I see. MR. HARNAIS: -- so they won't dismiss that or they won't 21 22 reduce it because we can't prove what we have here, but we've got him on this, so let's, let's go after him. 23 MR. MAZZONE: Right. We believe he's, we believe he's been 24

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involved --

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         MR. HARNAIS: Yes.
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         MR. MAZZONE: -- in X, Y, and Z, we don't know --
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         MR. HARNAIS: Yes.
         MR. MAZZONE: -- just believe, and okay, we'll, we'll stick
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       with the --
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         MR. HARNAIS: Exactly.
         MR. MAZZONE: -- and that's what, and that's what you're
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       saying is unconstitutional?
         MR. HARNAIS: I believe it's unconstitutional --
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         MR. MAZZONE: Okay.
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         MR. HARNAIS: -- because they don't need to prove it, but
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       they're going to punish him for it.
         MR. MAZZONE: Punishment meaning the --
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         MR. HARNAIS: That they're not willing --
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         MR. MAZZONE: -- they're not going to break down --
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         MR. HARNAIS: Exactly.
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         MR. MAZZONE: -- which they would if they had no other
       knowledge --
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         MR. HARNAIS: Intel, yeah.
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         MR. MAZZONE: Okay. That's fine. Thank you.
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         MR. HARNAIS: Thank you.
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         MR. MAZZONE: For clearing that up.
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         MR. HARNAIS: Thank you.
         MR. MAZZONE: And the second question I have and, and is
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       you're, you know, you have a very important role as president
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       of the MBA --
         MR. HARNAIS: Yes, thanks. I'm checking up on everybody,
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       just want to know.
         MR. MAZZONE: What, yeah.
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         What, what is, what is, I don't know if the MBA has a
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       position.
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         Is, is the MBA comfortable or are you comfortable with the
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       idea of a Judge having a non-reviewable discretion when it
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       comes to, when it comes to delivering a sentence, like there's
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       no issue of uniformity or, you know what --
         MR. HARNAIS: Yeah.
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         MR. MAZZONE: -- I mean is that, you know --
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         MR. HARNAIS: I --
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         MR. MAZZONE: -- except for the statutory maximum is --
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         MR. HARNAIS: Yeah.
         MR. MAZZONE: -- but put that aside, but other than that,
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       are you comfortable every case is different so a Judge can
       issue a different sentence however he or she wants?
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         MR. HARNAIS: Well, I think there should be a combination of
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       two. And I know Justice Gants brought up an opportunity that
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       the Commonwealth would maybe be able to appeal a Judge's
       sentence or have it reviewed.
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         I, is the MBA accountable?
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         The MBA I guess my, my, the stance, the MBA stance would be
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       that we want the Judges to do the right thing, and if the,
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1 it's not be done, anything, then there has to be some accountability on, on Judges as well, in other words if, if 2 3 the reason why we're here is because the mandatory sentence came into effect years ago because --4 5 MR. MAZZONE: I know. That's why, 6 MR. HARNAIS: -- maybe things weren't being accountable. 7 MR. MAZZONE: I know. And you're, and you're, I appreciate 8 your --9 MR. HARNAIS: Yeah. 10 MR. MAZZONE: -- your, your keeping your eye on history. 11 MR. HARNAIS: Yeah. MR. MAZZONE: Because that's why we have minimum --12 13 MR. HARNAIS: That's why we have mandatory sentences. 14 MR. MAZZONE: Yeah. Yeah. 15 MR. HARNAIS: But, but I think society has to change and I think judiciaries change. 16

They see, I, they see what's going on out there. It's not a black and white, it's not a, Judges I think aren't in the position of anymore of we'll just call them balls and strikes. They have to deal with what's all around them. They have to deal what's going on in society.

If a Judge doesn't give the appropriate sentence, you know, they should, probably should be some appellate review, and I know Justice Gants --

MR. MAZZONE: Okay.

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MR. HARNAIS: -- had indicated that.

And I don't, the MBA wouldn't be opposed to that.

What, we're just opposed to the fact that if you just bring down the basic what are you doing, you're having the legislature, with all due respect to legislatures here, you're applying a blanket law without knowing the slightest fact that occurred in that case.

Now, and I understand what the legislature has to do. It has to protect society.

But if that's the goal, look at what you're doing at the end. You're opening the door, and, and I, because I have a limited vocabulary, I tell very blunt stories.

Picture a gentleman serving 15 years mandatory, picture him fifteen years and one day, he gets out.

Picture what he had to live through 15 years, the whole rules and rules that are, happen in prison.

You don't want to bump into him on a bus, do you?

Because you know what, he lives in a whole different world,
and now he's back out in the real world, and he doesn't, may
not have the ability to educate himself as to how it's out
there.

And that's what you do with the mandatory sentences.

There's, there's, as people like to say, you know, people don't want people to go to jail, it's, no. It's not the jail issue that concerns me.

It's the end result because there is no way to earn your, everybody has to earn their way some places. You're not letting them earn their way out the door.

In fact, you're not even checking if they got any sort of help while they were in jail. You're just saying at the end of 15 years, they're out the door.

So where's the responsibility of people that care and say, you know what, we not only have to protect, protect the community, the community, we have to make sure that they're able to earn their way out the door by actions they do in, and programs they were involved in while they were in prisons.

You take that incentive out of them. You take it completely out of them because they, it doesn't matter what they do.

I get myself better, I go through treatment, or I sit in my cell and deal with the other inmate and we talk about how we can score down the road.

It doesn't matter. I'm going to get out in ten years, I'm going to get out in five years, I'm getting out in two years.

You need to give people incentives, number one.

And number two, you need to be worried about what happens when they get out.

It's very easy to put people in jail. I can tell you 15 years ago I would have told you, yeah, drug addicts, put them in jail.

It's not like that. It's really not.

Think about what you're doing. Think about the end result.

And that's the most important thing because the end result affects them and us. So.

JUDGE LU: thank you, Attorney Harnais.

I, I, I do want to welcome Charles Anderson from the Department of Correction, and Edward Lynch from the Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office.

Other questions of our panelists?

Peter Ettenberg from Worcester.

MR. ETTENBERG: Thank you.

This is I think directed towards Mr. Hall because you probably weren't here this morning.

We had I think seven District Attorneys, who together in, I think in force I think is the way they, they sat here, who said to us that they don't use mandatory minimums for leverage, and you came forward here and said when I was a District Attorney, I did it because I knew I had the leverage.

What do we say to them when they say they don't?

MR. HALL: I mean I think reasonable people can disagree.

But the reality is if you were to ask them about the number of plea bargains that happened, specifically on cases where a mandatory minimum case, offense was charged, what is the explanation for charging it in the first place if there is this discretion that exists throughout the prosecutorial process?

Because if it's not being used for leverage, why charge it,

if it's ultimately going to be dismissed in exchange for a

plea?

I'd be curious to hear what their answer is to that question.

MR. ETTENBERG: So would I.

Thank you.

MR. HARNAIS: If I could just address that, I think there was a prior testimony that I believe what, what you said was said in this one may conflict with what was said at the prior testimony in front of the, I believe in front of the Judiciary Committee, that it was mentioned that it was used as a tool.

The example I said with regards to intel was the exactly said at the prior committee meeting.

So I will, will tell you I think there might be discrepancy there.

JUDGE LU: Okay. Other questions for the panelists?

Mr. Rosenthal?

MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes, thank you.

I have, I don't know if, if, especially Barb knows an answer to this, and we have a wonderful staff, and I happened to ask them this question.

But some reforms were made, and I think it's 2010, on the House of Correction mandatories for drugs, and some, I, I, some people were released on parole at halftime that would not

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       otherwise have been released.
         Am I correct on that?
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         And the --
         MS. DOUGAN: The 2010 reforms --
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: The first --
         MS. DOUGAN: -- yes.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: -- the first time there was any kind of
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       reform on sentencing --
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         MS. DOUGAN: Yes.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: -- in my lifetime.
         MS. DOUGAN: Those who were sentenced to a county House of
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       Correction became eligible for parole the same as other
       country prisoners except with certain aggravating factors.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: So the real question I'm trying to get at is
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       whether you have any idea whether there's any data on their
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       recidivism rates subsequent to being paroled?
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         I know that's been studied in other jurisdictions, New
       York, California, and the data shows that these early releases
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       do not lead to extra recidivism.
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         But do you know of anything that's been studied in
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       Massachusetts about the people who were paroled at that time
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       about recidivism rates?
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         MS. DOUGAN: No. I think though the more significant reforms
       were certainly in 2012 where we did see --
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: Right.
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MS. DOUGAN: -- folks in state prison being, becoming eligible either for the first time ever or at an earlier date.

I don't think we've had time to see what the data --

MR. ROSENTHAL: Right.

MS. DOUGAN: -- is on that.

MR. ROSENTHAL: That's why I went back --

MS. DOUGAN: But I would also do the same shout out for the, the, the reports from the research staff of the Sentencing Commission.

I can't tell you how excited I get when a new one comes out. I mean they're actually stellar.

And I think they actually, let me run with Marty's comment, provide a really strong rebuttal to what the District Attorneys said this morning which was that, oh, you know, it's only the bad guys that we put away, the, the violent gang bangers.

Your excellent studies have consistently shown for over 20 years that over half of those who are sentenced to mandatory minimums for drugs fall into the two lowest criminal history categories out of five.

And I mean I always say to folks, don't take it from me, take it from the Sentencing Commission reports, that that is very much inconsistent with the claim of the District Attorneys that only the, the worst of the worst get mandatory minimums.

The data, your data, shows that many of the folks, over half, are in the two lowest level categories.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chair, one other question if I could, hopefully to Rashaan.

You made some reference to the deterrence issue, and we heard from the DAs earlier at least one of them that they thought the mandatories provided certainty which would, would, be a deterrent.

And I have always felt the mandatories provide no certainty and that it's only certainty of arrests that would deter people anyway.

And so my question is, what do you think about the certainty of mandatories as far as potential criminals and so forth goes?

Do, do you think they provide any certainty that, that helps prevent crime?

MR. HALL: It, I can't get into the mind of, of individuals who are involved with any level of drug usage or distribution.

But I know that given the prominence of mandatory minimum sentences and how well, the ubiquity of mandatory minimum sentences, and how well known they are, for there to be this many people in the criminal justice system charged with drug offenses that carry a mandatory minimum sentence, I say that the deterrent effect has failed.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay.

MS. FRANGULES: And, Marty, if I can just add in, I mean what our clients, our, I'm not going to say I, get into the mind of most drug dealers, but I know a lot of them, the ones who have been caught obviously, but not a single person has ever said to us, you know, I was perusing Mass General Laws Chapter 260 or 94C, and I looked at what the mandatory minimum is for this offense and compared that to the odds that I would be incarcerated in such and such a county, what my stance would be.

People aren't thinking like that.

And the folks who are struggling with, you know, substance abuse or addiction, what they tell us is I never even heard of a mandatory minimum sentence. I just wanted to know where I could get my Percocet, where I could get my Oxy, where I could, you know, get my heroin.

So in terms of deterrent effects, I think, I mean we wouldn't be here today, as Bob said, if, if it worked.

But we, I've never talked to anybody, which doesn't mean they're not out there, but who has taken that sort of rational approach, a cost benefit analysis to what their actions are going to be and what the possible punishment is.

Most, most people had never even heard of mandatory minimums until they went to Court.

MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Okay.

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         All right. So I want to thank Barbara Dougan from Families
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       Against Mandatory Minimums, Robert Harnais, President of the
       Massachusetts Bar Association, Rahsaan Hall of the Racial
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       Justice Program at the ACLU of Massachusetts, and Maryanne
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 5
       Frangules of the Mass Organization for Addiction Recovery.
 6
         Thank you so much.
 7
         MS. DOUGAN: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: Have a good day.
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         MR. HALL: Thank you, your Honor.
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         JUDGE LU: All right. We're going to call on Pamela,
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       Attorney Pamela Hunt.
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         Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable, Ms. Hunt.
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       And --
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         MS. HUNT: Thank you, your Honor.
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         JUDGE LU: -- if you pull that microphone up --
         MS. HUNT: I know, I'm short.
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         JUDGE LU: -- and talk right into it, please.
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18
         And please spell your name for the stenographer if you
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       would.
20
         MS. HUNT: Okay.
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         P-A-M-E-L-A, H-U-N-T.
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         Not, not hard.
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         JUDGE LU: And Ms., Ms. Hunt is a former member of the
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       Massachusetts Sentencing Commission.
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         MS. HUNT: I can't believe it's been 20 years.
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But everyone seems to think so.

Yes, and I'm proud of the fruitful and rewarding work we did, and I see you're facing many of the same issues that we, we faced.

In the limited time I think since it's, it's hard to sit through these hearings, I, I know, we, we had several.

I want to focus just on a couple of points that I, I think are important and critical to a comprehensive, effective and fair sentencing system.

One thing that we now know that we did not know in the past when we, we spent a huge amount of time trying to rank crimes, which crimes were the most serious, take a look at the different criminal history, and we never agreed on the numbers in those grid boxes. We agreed to send the whole package to the legislature, but we never agreed on all the specifics, and it's hard to do that.

But now we have learned that if the legislature enacts guidelines, saying here is a grid, here are guidelines, here are ranges, then according to what the Supreme Court has ruled in the Washington Case, <u>Blakely</u> and I think <u>Cunningham</u> case out of California, and certainly <u>Booker</u> on the federal side, that the, whatever number is in that grid box becomes the new statutory maximum.

So if it's a 20 year felony and the grid says seven to ten years, ten is the new maximum for that crime.

And to exceed that maximum, the defendant is entitled to have the aggravating factor found by a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. That's part of his Sixth Amendment Right.

We didn't know that at the time, and I don't think anyone knew that at the time.

So it was probably really good that the legislature did not enact what we, what we proposed.

The, the other difficulty I think with enacting and in, in dealing with, with a grid that is basically going to require a jury trial to exceed, I mean it's only upward departures that matter because that's where the constitutional right is, but we're a common law state. We have common law crimes.

Most other states that have guideline systems have very, have, are code states, and they have, they have very, very restrictive and narrow definitions of a, I mean they may have 20 levels of burglary, or they may have a lot of levels, and it's easier for them to, you know, have, have an, a particular range of crimes, and then if they want to exceed that for grid box, then offer the, the jury trial option.

But we're wide open because our crimes can be committed in a variety of ways.

So it, it's just really different.

The other problem is what do you, if you have an enacted, legislative enacted system, then you have room for exceeding or going under whatever is in the grid box.

We came up with six which we called nonexclusive factors for departures both ways.

Well, the, the difficulty then becomes how are you going to, what are going to be the appropriate departure factors for this, for the Commission to come up with?

It, six are certainly not going to, would never be enough.

And then constitutionally, it may be a question of whether that aggravating factor that would have to go to a jury would have to be pled in the indictment or complaint which creates a whole other problem and I think for prosecutors who may not know the existence of some of these aggravating factors at the time.

So the, the point is you can create a guideline system that is comprehensive, that is, that is thorough, that is thoughtful, but in a, but don't submit it to the legislature.

Make, make it be voluntary, make judicial sentencing discretionary with guidance, and that I, I believe is the purpose of the Commission.

So, and I think it also gives Judges the option to experiment in appropriate cases.

And to the degree you may want to require them to put their reasons in writing for departure, fine.

I mean there's a lot of things that you can do without submitting a grid to the legislature.

And I think it doesn't mean that you shouldn't take a look

at all of the other parts of our criminal justice system including not just the drug mandatories, all the mandatories, except in my view murder should stay mandatory.

But you know, they're, we as a Commission didn't, we recommended some changes to the drug mandatories, but we did not take on the gun cases, the multiple offense OUIS, and since then, there's been a prolific, proliferation of more and more and more mandatory sentences for other kinds of crimes.

So I think that's within your purview to think about. And I think you, you, it's a hard job because you don't get a very good reception at the legislature if you want to deal with some of those issues, although there have been some changes recently that have been helpful.

I chaired the Intermediate Sanctions Committee of, of the Commission in its last iteration. And we initially proposed, I think probably for the first time in, probably first in the nation, proposed putting within each grid box an intermediate sanction option, and that was great, but it wasn't, clearly we now know it wasn't enough.

We envisioned much more than what has happened mostly because of resources, and, and it isn't, certainly wasn't probation's fault or community correction's fault or anybody's fault.

It's just there wasn't enough there.

And there wasn't a good enough mentality about thinking

about all different kinds of sentencing options that you can bring to the floor, outline them, you know, make sure the Judges and prosecutors and defense attorneys and the public and victims understand all the different things that can be done, and why they might be good for a particular individual.

We also, since the last failed attempt at, at guidelines in the legislature, Mike Traft, who was on the Commission with me, a defense attorney, and I and probation and parole and through the Mass Bar Association, we were invited to try to come up with a system of post-incarceration supervision.

We've heard today and we've heard for years that mandatory post-incarceration supervision is essential.

We also know unfortunately that most Judges say they do it when they give a from and after probation sentence after a prison sentence.

And that takes care of the problem with X to X and a day, or the concern with some Judges who I've heard tell me is that they would rather keep control because they don't trust the Parole Board.

Well, we're one of the few jurisdictions that parole and probation are in different branches of government.

And in most states, all of this is handled in a single entity.

Now, that is a political question that is not easy to deal with, but that, it's a reality.

So we have to, I think, or you, I suggest you have to come up with a system that offers enough options at the front end and offers some required mandatory in some way supervision at the back end.

And the, the system that we sort of came up with, it was not ideal, would basically encourage inmates to earn parole, and of course that means they have to have programs available to them in, in the jails, the Houses of Correction and, and the prisons.

But if they earn parole and then succeed on parole, the socalled mandatory post-supervision piece would be dismissed. It would, they would be rewarded.

You, you give them the carrot as well as the stick of supervision.

And so that was really the critical piece, and also that these periods of post-incarceration supervision not be unbearably long, get rid of the homegrin kind of issue where if you're surrendered on a suspended sentence, you go for the whole time.

That's something that I think the Commission can certainly address.

But I think we find that whatever, as long as the, the risk needs are assessed at the time of release, that's when you have to impose this, the conditions that a person needs.

The difficulty with a Judge who wants to do from and after,

a prison sentence and from and after probation, is the fact that you have no idea who that individual is going to be when he or she gets out and what needs they're going to have or what they may have done while they are incarcerated to address some of the concerns that, that put them in the system in the first place.

So the other question is what do you do with violations?

Some people say we don't want parole to do it because
there's less due process than a probation surrender in Court.

Well, part of the effectiveness of a, of a, of a system is the ability to act swiftly and promptly but not severely.

You know, the violation can go quickly and you're in for a short period of time because you're still going to have to get out and you're going to still have these same issues when you're on the street.

But these kinds of, these kinds of issues, you know, it's hard.

Everyone thinks post incarceration supervision is a good thing.

But how's it going to be done? Who's going to do it? How are you going to assess what's really needed so we're not wasting our resources, so we're not having somebody on probation and parole at the same time and paying fees to both?

And the other thing that I think is, is sort of important to a system that I, I urge you to consider is that if people

succeed in reintegration and reentry into the community, maybe there's a way to ameliorate or, or discharge some of the financial and collateral consequence obligations that we put on corrected offenders which are, convicted offenders that, that really, really make reentry difficult.

I would never suggest that we offer restitution relief or the victim witness fee relief, because those are, those are important parts of, of our system, but everything else and all the other collateral consequences I think you can take a look at to see what else is out there that might be, if it's necessary for someone to successfully re-enter, to get a job, get housing, get mental and, and mental health and, and medical care and a, and a job, see what the CORI law has to say.

I mean there are so many pieces to a comprehensive scheme that we never got a chance to look at, and I think the time is really, really there for you to look at.

And I urge you to, to really look at all the parts, pre, post, and obviously in Court sentencing.

And, and take a look at the other, at the other mandatories.

You might, you might consider if you use a grid system even as an advisory system, you might want to say in calculating someone's criminal history, you might want to say if a crime is more than ten years old, it counts less.

Or if the crime was committed when someone was under what we now know was some serious adolescent brain development issues, that might count less.

Those are the kinds of things that, that you can be creative about.

But I think examining the impact and extent of the economic and other we know are civil, but heavily burdensome sanctions that go along with a lot of convictions.

So I've probably taken too long, and I am sorry, but I have been living this this many years.

So thank you very much.

JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Hunt.

So do we have questions for Pam Hunt, former member of the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission?

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: I don't have a question, but I have a thank you because I lived through that with you as well and you were fabulous.

So you're, it's so interesting to hear you talk now and hear what we're doing now and kind of, it's really, I've been taking a lot of notes so thank you very much --

MS. HUNT: Well, I would think any, I appreciate the, the deliberations of the Commission are, must be not open to the public, but to the degree either I or any of my, of my colleagues from the previous Commission would be more than willing to answer any questions or, or assist you in whatever

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way we could.
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         JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Thank you.
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         JUDGE LU: Mr. Rosenthal?
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         MS. HUNT: All right.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes.
         I'm very happy to hear you're, you're closing comments
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       about looking at all parts of the system --
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         MS. HUNT: Right.
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: -- including pre-sentencing and so forth.
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         But the question I want to ask is getting back to the issue
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       of voluntary guidelines, and to what extent. I'm guite
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       troubled by that idea because I don't think voluntary
       quidelines will make a dent in the smart on crime issue and of
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       the mass incarceration issues that I'm concerned about.
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         And the question is, aren't there states that have
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       presumptive or binding guidelines with departure processes
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       since Blakely?
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         MS. HUNT: Yes. But I, I think --
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: And I guess I wasn't sure --
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         MS. HUNT: Yeah. I think my point --
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         MR. ROSENTHAL: -- if you were tying that to Blake --
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         MS. HUNT: -- is that they're, the way they categorize their
       crimes is so very different, and their grids are like felony
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       A, felony B, felony C, felony D. And it's just very different
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       from our common law crimes which are wide open.
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- And I, and I frankly would never suggest that you recommend changing that.
 - MR. ROSENTHAL: I agree with that.
 - MS. HUNT: And I, I think what they might other, might also say in other jurisdictions is that, you know, these second trials or the, the jury having to decide the existence of aggravating factors is not a problem because most cases are resolved by plea, and so it's really not that burdensome on the system.
 - But they have in the elements of all their crimes aggravating factors. That's sort of the way they, it's just a completely different system in most places than we have.
- MR. ROSENTHAL: Okay. Well, thank you.
- MS. HUNT: Okay.

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- JUDGE LU: All right. Thank you, Ms. Hunt.
- 16 MS. HUNT: Sure.
- JUDGE LU: Thank you so much for joining us and giving us
 the benefit of your perspective.
- 19 MS. HUNT: Okay.
- JUDGE LU: All right. So I'm going to call on Dorothy
- 21 Weitzman.
- 22 All right Good afternoon.
- MS. WEITZMAN: Good afternoon.
- JUDGE LU: Have a seat and make yourself comfortable.
- 25 MS. WEITZMAN: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Please tell us your name and spell your name for 1 2 the stenographer, please. 3 MS. WEITZMAN: Dorothy Weitzman, it's W-E-I-T-Z-M-A-N. JUDGE LU: And your sign in here says that you represent 4 5 various groups. Maybe you want to tell us about some of that so that --6 7 MS. WEITZMAN: All right. 8 JUDGE LU: -- we get an idea. 9 MS. WEITZMAN: I will. 10 Okay. Thank you. I live in Newton, Massachusetts, and I have been a member 11 12 of something called the Middlesex County Prison Coordinating Committee. 13 JUDGE LU: I'm sorry. What's the name of it? 14 15 MS. WEITZMAN: It was the Middlesex County Prison 16 Coordinating Committee, concerned itself with Billerica House 17 of Correction mainly. It's now part of the Concord Prison Outreach, and I'm 18 19 involved in it still, offering volunteer services as much as I 20 can to the jail and to the HOC in Billerica. And I'm also a social worker, and I'm active in the 21 22 criminal justice part of the National Association of Social 23 Workers. And I'm also a member, and have been, of the Criminal 24

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Justice Policy Coalition.

And I'm not speaking on any of their behalf but I, I think that I've, I am in consonance with their positions what I've heard from them today, and the first group didn't testify and isn't as active.

I've been active for 20 years really.

The first time I testified on this was when the Sentencing Commission's proposals were here, and we had the idea that the Speaker of the House Flaherty would want to do away with mandatory minimums as I remember it.

And I saw then the erratic, what I considered irrational aspects, and I still do, of many, of any of the mandatory minimums.

Like I remember learning that if somebody, and it might have been a real case down on the Cape, someone had a, a gun in their car that they didn't know was in their car.

Okay. So these things then devolved to the Police. What are they, are they going to charge, all the different problems.

And with women being brought, brought into the criminal justice system and being tried and convicted on drug charges and getting worse, worse convictions than somebody else that was really doing the dealing or selling in their house.

These kinds of things have seemed unjust, irrational, and not right to me and I felt that we really should not have these mandatory minimums in place here in our state.

And I hope we will be considering them, and you will be

recommending their, their repeal and particularly in the area of drugs.

I wanted to say a few things about the general context and, and to urge you, I've been sitting here hearing people bringing up a lot of the issues that are out there in criminal justice now.

And many of us, and you may yourselves feel that the system really is out of hand in a serious way, that we've had an escalation in incarceration that shouldn't be maintained, that shouldn't have gotten as high as it is, and that there's many things that, that need to be changed.

And so you're being asked to consider things that you may not have thought you would be considering, and I hoped you might hear me out a little bit on some of the things I see.

I think right now we have a wake up period. A lot of us have been learning, I've been learning for 20 years, but this is a wake up period now.

I've been learning things I did not know before that are out there in the system, and I hope you are all learning them and you're learning them today and many, if you will learn and come to grips with them on your work on this.

I feel like what we've got now, we've got some of the things we've learned.

For example. We've got prisoners and ex-prisoners active in a way they never were before.

I would never have known, it wouldn't have been on the agenda, to repeal the, the motor vehicle collateral damage issue if it weren't for EPOCA and groups of ex-prisoners that, that have worked.

And we've been hearing and learning things that, by the, from the people who were affected.

Social workers I know brought to my attention and others and we created a Massachusetts Bail Fund. We did not know, I did not know the numbers of people who are being held in jail, the jail population's been going up. We have too many people who are poor, who are, aren't able to meet bail, and people who can meet bail on the same charges are getting out.

There's an inequity, income inequity problem that's extreme that we have that we should face up to.

I wasn't facing up to it. You may not be as aware as, as you might become on it. I hope you will consider and, and deal with this.

On the national front, we, we started to learn things from Ferguson. I didn't know about the fees. There are too many fees apparently, like bail, that low income people are faced with because they got caught up in the criminal justice system, they did something wrong.

They, they however are getting out of prison, getting out of jail, being served supposedly by our criminal justice system but facing fees for their parole, for their probation,

and that's putting barriers in their, their recovery as someone just now said.

And I don't know whether Sentencing Commission guidelines and whatever you work on can make recommendations in that area.

But we don't know much about it. We don't have the facts out there in the public right now.

I have hope that we could start learning how many fees are they, how much are they costing, who's paying them, who's getting the funds?

These are things that are very distressing to learn in Massachusetts that this is the case.

On another national area, we, we started to face up to solitary confinement, that again it's taken off in a way that's not helpful.

People, prisoners, inmates, Correctional Officers are suffering from having to do, implement this solitary confinement policy.

They should reverse that.

So there's too many things that are wrong with the system.

So then we ask what about all the good people that are in

the system that are implementing it? The District Attorneys, the Police, the Correctional Officers, the people who are Judges?

How many of them are, are kind of caught up in the system,

used to what's going on, thinking it's okay?

I hope you are all, start to think, we'll try to think differently, we'll take another look at what we've been doing, we'll start to try to reverse the patterns that have gotten in place that we've gotten used to and we didn't realize that they were as unjust, having as many bad consequences as they did have.

And I think that's hard, and it's hard for me to see good, good hard working people who say they think they've done well with the mandatory minimums.

But plea bargaining, I didn't know how much plea bargaining was playing a role, how many cases don't go to Court.

There's a whole lot of dysfunctional things out there.

And I hope you will really be part of changing, of making the criminal justice reform that many of us have been working on bills, there's many bills we want changed.

We also think you can play a role, and that's why I came today and why I'm saying what I'm saying now.

Thank you.

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JUDGE LU: Thank you, Ms. Weitzman.

Any questions for Ms. Weitzman?

MS. WEITZMAN: Thank you very much.

JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Thank you.

JUDGE LU: Thank you so much. Have a great day.

25 MS. WEITZMAN: Thanks.

1 JUDGE LU: So is there anyone we've missed or that wants to 2 say anything as the, as we finish up the Commission Hearing? 3 Okay. Nobody is answering. You know what, I am going to express an opinion here, and 4 5 that is that the Sentencing Commission's staff is truly the best that government has to offer. 6 MR. ROSENTHAL: It's true. 7 8 JUDGE HEFFERNAN: And the Trial Court Transcription Office 9 as well. 10 Thank you so much. 11 Folks outside of state government do not know all that the 12 Sentencing Commission staff does. It has a lot more to do, it has a lot, it has to do with a lot more than just sentencing 13 data, and we're very grateful to them for all of their 14 15 incredibly hard work. 16 Is there any further, anything else that any member of the Commission wishes to say? 17 18 MR. ROSENTHAL: I may have some more questions. 19 No, just kidding. 20 JUDGE LU: Is there a motion to adjourn the public hearing? MR. ROSENTHAL: So moved. 21 22 Motion to adjourn. JUDGE LU: Seconded? 23 JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Second. 24 25 JUDGE LU: All in favor say aye?

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THE COMMISSION: Aye.
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          JUDGE LU: Opposed?
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          The public hearing is adjourned.
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          Thank you everybody.
          JUDGE HEFFERNAN: Thank you very much.
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       (2:38 p.m.)
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