

October 16, 2015

THE SENTENCING PROJECT'S STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE SENTENCING REFORM ACT

"The Sentencing Reform Act, introduced by Chairman Bob Goodlatte, Ranking Member John Conyers, and Ranking Member Sheila Jackson Lee, together with the companion Senate bill, represents the most substantial criminal justice reform legislation introduced since the inception of the 'tough on crime' movement, and is the best indication we have that those days are over," said Marc Mauer, Executive Director of The Sentencing Project. "The broad bipartisan support for the bill is a tribute to the hard work in Congress on these issues over the past two years and suggests that prospects for passage of the legislation are promising even in the current era of a divided Congress.

"The bill reflects a recognition that the harsh penalties adopted by lawmakers in recent years have been overly broad, costly to taxpayers, and have produced diminishing returns for public safety. Among the most salutary provisions of the legislation is the measure to retroactively apply the crack cocaine sentencing reductions of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 to individuals serving time for these offenses in federal prison. There is no reason why someone sentenced for such an offense the day before that legislation was enacted should be serving more time in prison than another person sentenced just after enactment. This will bring a greater measure of fairness and racial justice to the federal sentencing structure, and can serve as a model for how to address other areas of excessive punishments."