



Promoting Fair & Effective Criminal Sentencing • Strengthening Families & Communities

Prominent experts on criminal sentencing are increasingly outspoken against ineffective and unfair mandatory minimum sentences and in favor of reform. These experts include Supreme Court Justices, federal judges and national policy experts.

What do the experts say about mandatory minimum sentences?

- **U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist**

"[Mandatory minimum sentencing statutes] are perhaps a good example of the law of unintended consequences."

- **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy**

"I can accept neither the necessity nor the wisdom of federal mandatory minimum sentences. In too many cases, mandatory minimum sentences are unwise and unjust."

- **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer**

"Mandatory sentencing laws should be abolished."

- **Former Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey**

"I am unalterably opposed to the system of mandatory minimums. I think we need to give this authority back to the judges."

- **Former U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese, II**

(served under President Reagan)

"I think mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders ought to be reviewed. We have to see who has been incarcerated and what has come from it."

- **Former FBI Director Louis J. Freeh**

(who has also served as a Special Agent of the FBI, an Assistant United States Attorney and a United States District Judge) Board Member, Stand Up for What is Right and Just (SURJ), Delaware organization opposing mandatory minimum sentences.

"Take one [packet] away and no mandatory minimum applies. Add one and an addict faces a long term of imprisonment."

- **Judge J. Spencer Letts, U.S. District Judge,**

Central District of California, Senior Status 2000, Nominated by President Ronald Reagan, 1985.

"Statutory mandatory minimum sentences create injustice because the sentence is determined without looking at the particular defendant. . . . It can make no difference whether he is a lifetime criminal or a first-time offender. Indeed, under this sledgehammer approach, it could make no difference if the day before making this one slip in an otherwise unblemished life the defendant had rescued 15 children from a burning building or had won the Congressional Medal of Honor while defending his country."

- **The American Bar Association**

House of Delegates Resolution 107, "Blueprint for Cost Effective Pretrial, Detention, Sentencing and Corrections Systems"

"Each state and federal government should repeal mandatory sentencing laws that unduly limit a judge's discretion to individualize sentences, so that the sentence in each case fairly reflects the gravity of the offense and the degree of culpability of the offender."