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Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

November 12, 2009

MACDL Members:

Thanks to the tireless work of Marty Rosenthal, MACDL's voice continues to be heard in testimony on the issue of sentencing reform. Marty informs us that action on this matter is imminent. That means it's time for folks to contact their state senators.

Before Nov. 18 (next Wednesday), the state Senate is likely to debate and vote on a sentencing reform bill that includes parole eligibility for drug offenders. That means we have only a short period of time to make a big impact and roll back almost 3 decades of pseudo-toughness run amuck.

If senators don't hear from their constituents, they won't vote for reform. Our main suggested message is twofold:

1. It's time to finally reform the useless and wasteful mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenders, allowing them to apply for parole. This will BOTH save the state millions of dollars, AND (a) help inmates prepare for re-entry, (b) prevent recidivism, and (c) promote post-release supervision -- instead of the "X years and a day" sentences which are downright "dumb on crime". Please support passage of a strong sentencing reform bill that includes parole eligibility for drug cases.
2. At the same time, please do not support a possible and strictly politically-motivated linkage adding either mandatory post-release supervision (MPRS) or a "Three-Strikes" Bill. Either one would be a budget-busting net-widening that would actually add inmates to bursting prisons. The former, MPRS, is the germ of a good idea (e.g. presumptive parole), but needs further study and careful planning before it's ready for enactment.

For more details, see the MACDL statement on our Web site at [www.macdl.com](http://www.macdl.com). Since statehouse developments are hard to predict, our statement is a work-in-progress, as reflected in its frequently changing date; we'll try to post it anew each time we change it.

Jack Cunha  
President