



NEWS RELEASE
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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Statement on Sentencing Reform Legislation

Washington, DC – Today, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a [statement](#) in support of certain provisions in the Senate’s bipartisan *Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2017*, which proposes to reduce mandatory minimum sentences for particular nonviolent offenses and to return discretion to judges in more cases. The bill moves sentencing levels down in many cases so that low-level crimes are adequately, but not excessively, punished. It also makes retroactive sentencing reductions in crimes involving crack cocaine. Fair administration depends on public faith in the justice system, and the Senate bill takes important steps to restore the basis for that faith, by addressing longstanding inequity.

The Commission’s 2017 enforcement [report](#) tackled vexing challenges within the nation’s criminal justice systems: the severe, negative civil rights impacts of targeted fines and fees.

Chair Catherine E. Lhamon said, “The sentencing reduction provisions in this legislation are necessary to hew closer to the fair administration of justice in our country, and ensure that the criminal justice system does not more harshly judge marginalized communities without basis. I urge Congress to take swift action to correct these injustices.”

The statement was adopted by majority vote.

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Established in 1957 by the Civil Rights Act, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is the only independent, bipartisan federal agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about the Commission, and to view our reports, please visit <http://www.usccr.gov> and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).