



Members of Louisiana House of Representatives
Louisiana State Capital
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Dear Representative,

On behalf of FAMMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums), I write to support the reform efforts before the legislature. In particular, FAMMM supports SB 220, which would repeal Louisiana's harmful drug possession and distribution mandatory minimum sentences.

SB 220 and the rest of the criminal justice reform package, is a smart, evidence-based approach to reducing Louisiana's incarceration rate, currently highest in the nation. This package is the result of bipartisan negotiations among all of the relevant stakeholders in the criminal justice system, and has received the support of the District Attorneys Association, House and Senate leadership, and Governor Edwards. Louisiana has realized that their way of incarceration is unsustainable, and repealing mandatory minimums for these common, non-violent crimes will have a much needed impact on prison populations and public safety.

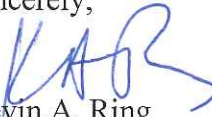
Louisiana's harsh mandatory minimum sentencing policies eliminate independent judicial discretion in sentencing and force judges to hand down sentences that are ineffective for both the community and the defendant. These determinate sentences focus valuable resources on incarcerating non-violent offenders for far longer than is necessary at a cost to the tax-payers.

While proponents of lengthy "one-size-fits-all" mandatory sentencing claim they increase public safety, the evidence tells a different story. Studies at the state and federal level have shown that mandatory minimum sentences do not reduce recidivism, and in some instances increase the risk of reoffending. And with an annual price tag of \$600 million, unnecessary incarceration does a disservice to taxpayers. By adopting SB 220, along with the rest of the reform package, Louisiana can reduce its prison population and save the state millions.

These measures are not just designed to save money, however. Instead, the reform package is designed to maximize public safety by adopting public policy backed by the best available evidence. Nearby states such as Georgia, Arkansas, and Oklahoma have reformed their sentencing laws and have experienced increased public safety. All told, more than 30 states have reformed their sentencing laws in the last several decades, and have enjoyed both falling crime rates and smaller prison populations. These reforms have allowed states to prioritize scarce resources and invest tax dollars in ways that reduce crime, whether by hiring more police officers to patrol streets and detectives to clear outstanding murders, or giving prosecutors more resources to end case backlogs. The result is fewer victims of crime, and swift and certain punishment for criminals.

FAMM supports the spirit of the criminal justice reform package before the legislature and strongly urges passage of SB 220. Louisiana should join the dozens of states that have embraced sentencing reform and pass this crucial legislation. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to Louisiana.

Sincerely,



Kevin A. Ring

President, Families Against Mandatory Minimums