

# Essay on sentencing

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## **My position on sentencing**

After reading chapter three, I think the current sentencing system needs to be amended. Different crimes require different sentencing depending on the magnitude of the crime. Today, the most practiced sentencing is sending the lawbreakers to the jail. In my own opinion, we should have a variety of sentences, and not necessary jailing (Schmallegger & Smykla, 2009).

## **The purpose of sentencing**

Over the years, sentencing has served different purposes. However, the primary purpose of sentencing is mainly to reprimand the lawbreaker. The first purpose of sentencing is to reduce crime by deterrence. When a criminal is sentenced, this prevents him or her from committing another crime. This in turn, serves an example to other lawbreakers and also prevents them from committing a similar offence. The other purpose of sentencing is reforming and rehabilitating of wrongdoers. Certainly, this links to the purpose of crime reduction. A good example of reform and rehabilitation is a drug abuse treatment requirement. Another purpose of sentencing is to protect the public. This involves protecting the public from the risk of more crimes being committed and from the criminal. Usually, this is achieved by removing the criminal from society, restricting the criminals on their activities or putting them on a supervised probation. The last purpose of sentencing is the making of recompense by wrongdoers to those peoples affected by their crimes. In such cases, this will require the criminals to make compensations to the individuals affected by their criminal behavior (Schmallegger & Smykla, 2009).

## **If you had the authority to manage sentencing, what would your priorities be and why**

If granted the authority to manage sentencing, my first priority will be introducing other alternative sentences. You will agree with me that the current sentencing system mostly involves sending lawbreakers to the jail. This in turn, has led to continued climb of populations in the jails and rising incarceration cost. The resulting overcrowding makes rehabilitation to be more difficult. In my opinion, use of custody for all offence types and duration of a custodial sentence continue to grow for reasons that cannot be linked with crime trends. I agree that significant periods of imprisonment should be the appropriate response for serious offenders, and those specifically persistent offenders are also likely to need imprisonment. However, less serious offenders and first time lawbreakers should be awarded community penalties when suitable. If I had the authority, I would introduce this approach as it is likely to produce the biggest public safety benefit for resources that are to be spent on the correctional services (Bloom, Heerema, and Schneider, 2007)

## **What changes will you make to the current sentencing system?**

Given the chance to make some changes to the current sentencing system, my main goal will be cutting edge of coming up with a sentencing system that will keep us safe in the most effective ways. This will be achieved by introducing alternative sentencing courts. These courts will be based on the ideologies of evidence-based sentencing. These courts will consider responding to unlawful behavior based on proven information, addressing

risks with effective court action, and ascertaining the specific risks that lawbreaker presents (Austin et al. 1995).

## **References**

Schmallegger, F., & Smykla, J. (2009). *Corrections in the 21st Century*. (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Bloom, H., Heerema, M. and Schneider, R. D. (2007) *Mental Health Courts: Decriminalizing the Mentally Ill*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Irwin Law.

Austin, James, et al. (1995). *National Assessment of Structured Sentencing*. Washington, DC: U. S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.