



JESUITS
Jesuit Conference
of Canada and
the United States



IGNATIAN
SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

TO: Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader Harry Reid

CC: Jesuit-Educated Members of the U.S. Senate

Senator John Barrasso (R-WY)
Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-PA)
Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL)
Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
Senator Timothy M. Kaine (D-VA)
Senator Mark Steven Kirk (R-IL)

Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT)
Senator Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ)
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD)
Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK)

RE: Criminal Justice Reform

FROM: Over 120+ Undersigned Graduates of Jesuit Law Schools in the U.S.

During his address to Congress earlier last year, Pope Francis offered “encouragement to all those who are convinced that a just and necessary punishment must never exclude the dimension of hope and the goal of rehabilitation.” As alumni [and faculty] of Jesuit law schools, our work as legal professionals often places us in direct contact with men, women, and young people involved in our nation’s justice system. **Today, we call on you, the leadership of the United States Senate, to pass meaningful and dignified criminal justice reform.**

Unfortunately, many elements of our justice system provide inadequate justice and in some cases perpetuate injustice. Too many people receive disproportionate sentences as a result of mandatory minimums. Care for victims often ends once a trial does. Countless individuals return from jail and prison inadequately prepared to re-enter society. Our reliance on the justice system to solve drug addiction, poverty, mental illness and joblessness leaves us worse off as a country.

We urge you to bring the bipartisan Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (S. 2123), to the Senate floor for a vote in this session of Congress. This bill reflects a broad consensus that has emerged in favor of criminal justice reform that addresses the length of nonviolent drug offenses, provides meaningful anti-recidivism programs in prison, and limits federal life without parole sentences and solitary confinement for juveniles.

This legislation is an important first step in making fundamental changes to ensure that our criminal justice system is grounded in respect for the God-given human dignity of every person. However, much more can and must be done to create a justice system that recognizes, in the Pope’s words, that “God is in everyone’s life. Even if the life of a person has been a disaster.”

The time to pass criminal justice reform is now. The bipartisan consensus on the issue is clear. Communities all across our country are calling for it. We, in our varied experiences, united by our Jesuit education and the commitment to justice it calls forth from us, stand with you as you tackle this vitally important issue.

For more information or to communicate with the signatories, please contact Christopher Kerr, Executive Director, Ignatian Solidarity Network at ckerr@ignatiansolidarity.net or Matthew Cuff, Senior Policy Advisor, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States at mcuff@jesuits.org.

Sincerely,

S. Joy Gaines - Georgetown University Law Center, 1995
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Steven Ayala - Marquette University Law School, 2014
Sarah Barnes - Marquette University Law School, 2013
Rachel Batterson - Georgetown University Law Center, 2000
Elizabeth Benki - Loyola University of New Orleans School of Law, 2012
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