

Dear Committee:

I write this letter to you in support of SB 191. To place a mandatory minimum on any person, with no chance to reduce that time, removes almost all drive for a person to improve themselves. It takes away the desire of rehabilitation and drive to better one's self from prior mistakes. It removes the ability for a judge to take into account any evidence, information or knowledge that separates actions. Essentially removing the role of what a judge is for. A person with no prior convictions or issues receive the same sentence as a repeat offender. In some cases, these minimums are longer than those more serious crimes that receive a lower sentence. Giving someone a chance to reduce their sentence with good behavior and other items of rehabilitation is vital in ensuring that someone actually grows and learns from their prior mistakes. The criminal justice system should be focused on the rehabilitation and growth of people with a goal to get them back into society as contributing members in the community. Let them be human again and let them live their lives as adults who have learned and grown from their past mistakes. Allow them to reconnect with family and loved ones who will support them on their continuing growth.

On a personal side, Measure 11 and mandatory minimums have taken away my best friend. A friend that I would consider closer to a brother than anything else. He has always been there for me in any moment of need. He has helped me grow as a man and helped shaped me in who I am today. But now he has been taken out of my life and won't be able to take part in any milestones of mine. He won't be able to be my best man in my wedding. He won't be there to watch my children grow up. He is no longer a phone call away when I need help or advice. The mandatory minimums don't just lock up and remove aspects of life for those accused, they are also removed from the life of loved ones. In turn we all lose some part of our life based on outdated and unjust rulings.

My best friend is a genuinely good person with sound morals and values who made one mistake in his past. Prior to his conviction, he had no criminal history and served in the U.S Army. That one mistake will now keep him from living a full life and contributing to society for 25 years. His mistake did not hurt or damage anyone in the community. His mistake affected only one other person and he thought he was helping this person so even in his misjudgment, he did it out of compassion. He has since realized what he did was wrong, but this one error in judgment will keep him from his family and loved ones for 25 years.

Thank you for your time on this matter. I pray you find direction to help all humans involved in this.