

Chippy the Logic Squirrel says "whoa"
to harsh sentencings.

2020 ELECTION CANDIDATES NEED TO
ADDRESS PRISON REFORM OR GO HOME

To understand just how important prison reform is, consider for a moment that in 2016, a prison in St. Clair had a staggering 249 reported inmate on inmate assaults for just that year. Almost an assault a day according to a New York Times press article.

This horrific report can not be ignored and is solid evidence that our

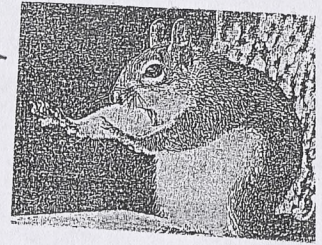
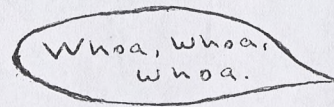
The sentencing commission and numerous judges have demanded congress reform "outdated and disproportionate guidelines"

prison systems are not ment to excessively incarcerate humans. So it's lost on me why the 2020 electorial candidates have largely refused and marginalized the topics of sentencing reform. Harsh sentencing plauges our courts today and the sentencing commission and numerous judges have demanded Congress reform "~~outdated disproportionate~~ guidelines" that the justice system must rely on, which they say are "overly sever guideline ranges".

The big picture is that America is paying 80 billion a year on the highest incarceration problem in the free world. This blemish on our country demands real attention. Every year millions of families are affected by this and children must grow up separated from incarcerated parents and loved ones must wait long periods to be together again. Those incarcerated must suffer the wide spread disease, sickness, and violence prevalent in our prisons that staff can not control due to lack of staff to address the over crowding problems.

It's nothing for a prosecuting attorney to get a 20 year bit out of a judge for a persons crime because crimes today have so many enhancements.

Without reform, we continue to support a perilous and monotonous problem. What's more, lack of reform also affects prison programs as well. Studies show that 65-70% of inmates who use prison programs will stay out of prison once released. But due to overcrowding, these programs are less accessible to inmates willing to utilize them.



The problem largely lies in the harsh sentencing guidelines of our justice system and the prosecuting attorneys that abuse that system. It's nothing for prosecuting attorneys to get a 20 year bit for a persons crime because crimes today have so many "enhancements to the original charges." It's no longer just Timmy broke the window. Now it's what time the window was broke +5 years, was it a church window +5 years, people were in the church when it happened +2 years, it was a stained glass window +3 years.

Prosecuting attorneys are treating justice like a video game, "racking up high sentencing scores" to elate themselves or to make a name

Sentencing guidelines at one time were suppose to help judges administer fair justice for different degrees of crime, but prosecuting attorneys are treating justice like a video game "racking up a high sentencing score" to elate themselves or to make a name for themselves. Judge Mark W. Bennett quoted in one court hearing, "It continue to perplex me that with only two exceptions, this United States Attorney's office has never met a downward variance that it has thought was appropriate in over 1562 sentences. -it seems statistically practically and legally impossible that the number of downward variances that this United States Attorneys office finds acceptable could remain so low, if justice in sentencing, not just convictions were the goal."

The reason Judges can't do more to pass what they think is a fair sentencing is because the prosecuting attorney has so much power to bully civilians once they are arrested. Thanks to the many laws today, prosecuting attorneys can threaten a person for crimes that, because of enhancements, could get a person an easy 40 years sentence, if done correctly. So the prosecuting attorney throws the defendant a plea deal that is still a ridiculously high sentence, but better then the super ridiculously high sentence he could get. This scares the civilian who has never even seen a law book into saying yes and essentially giving up all his rights for fear of life in prison. The public Defender is so overworked he has no time to fight the good fight for his client, so instead the defense just goes along with the horrible deal offered so he can move on to the next case.

The judges can no longer influence the sentence because it has now become a plea deal, which essentially pushes the Judge out of the picture and makes the prosecutors the new judges, able to be as unfair, bias, and vindictive as they please.

Judge Joseph F. Bataillon, Chief District Judge stated, "**The commission has acknowledged that often the value of a mandatory minimum sentence lies not in it's imposition, but in it's value as a bargaining chip--**". But this "bargaining chip" is hardly a "bargain" for defendants that have no experience in law and must face seasoned prosecuting attorneys with the power to throw 40 year sentences at them. No wonder that 97% of all cases in Federal Courts end in plea agreements. **It's not justice, it's forced ultimatums by abuse of power.**

The power a prosecuting attorney has must be bridled. the impact and suffering of prisoners must be taken more serious, and programs and ways for people to get out of prison sooner or avoid prison all together must be explored. People are not video game high scores to be "racked up" in order to further someones career or elate them. Neither are human lives a 1 million year trophy sentence medallion for a judge to retire on like a gold watch parting gift. Our courts are not a place for ulterior motives, they are a place to make justice fair and impartial. If our electoral parties can not or will not recognize these glaringly obvious issues and problems that need to be addressed, then they need to go home,

to their address.

-David Spade