



**CALIFORNIA STATE CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE**

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August 14, 2007

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Honorable Ricardo H. Hinojosa
Chair
United States Sentencing Commission
One Columbus Circle, N.E.
Suite 2-500, South Lobby
Washington, DC 20002-8002

RE:
Dear Judge Hinojosa and Commissioners:

The California State Conference of the NAACP has long advocated eliminating the disproportionately sentencing for crack cocaine offenses. The NAACP's mission is to protect the Civil Rights of all Americans. Equally important to our core mission are the freedom from disproportionate punishment, which are also at risk under the current sentencing regime.

The higher mandatory minimum penalties for crack cocaine are not medically, scientifically or socially justifiable. Many assumptions used in determining the sentencing disparities have been proven wrong in recent data. Scientific and medical experts have determined that in terms of pharmacological effects, crack cocaine is no more harmful than powder cocaine. The current crack cocaine sentencing guidelines simply filled prisons with low-level drug dealers and addicts whose punishments are worse than their crimes. Scientists say there are no pharmaceutical justifications for having different sentencing rules for crack and powder cocaine. Once the cocaine is in your bloodstream, there is absolutely no difference between powder and crack cocaine.

The current statutory sentencing disparity between powder and crack cocaine has a disproportionate impact on California's African Americans. Due in large part to the sentencing disparity based on the

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form of the drug, African Americans serve substantially more time in prison for drug offenses than do Caucasians.

For these reasons, the California State Conference of the NAACP urges the United States Sentencing Commission to approve the amendment to the crack guidelines and to make the amendment retroactively applicable to those who were sentenced before November 1, 2007.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice A. Huffman", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Alice A. Huffman
President
Cc: Hillary Shelton