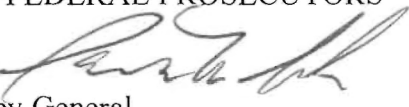




Washington, D.C. 20530

July 1, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL FEDERAL PROSECUTORS

FROM: James M. Cole 
Deputy Attorney General

SUBJECT: The U.S. Sentencing Commission's Decision on Retroactive Application of the Amendment to the Sentencing Guidelines for Crack Cocaine Offenses

On June 30, 2011, the U.S. Sentencing Commission voted unanimously to give retroactive effect to parts of its permanent amendment to the federal sentencing guidelines that implements the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 (FSA), Pub. L. 111-220. Retroactivity of the permanent amendment will become effective on November 1, 2011, the same day that the permanent amendment takes effect, unless Congress acts before then to disapprove either the amendment or retroactivity.

The permanent amendment reduces the quantity-based penalties for crack cocaine offenses (Part A of the amendment), amends the federal sentencing guidelines for drug offenses by adding specified aggravating and mitigating factors (Part B of the amendment), and eliminates the cross-reference in the federal sentencing guidelines for simple possession of crack cocaine to the more serious drug trafficking guideline (Part C of the amendment). **The Commission voted only to give retroactive effect to Parts A and C of the amendment.** The Commission limited retroactivity in this way in part to avoid lengthy factual hearings over the applicability of the new aggravating and mitigating factors to cases sentenced some time ago.

The Commission also voted to amend section §1B1.10 of the sentencing guidelines, which governs retroactivity, in light of *Freeman v. United States* __ S. Ct. __ (June 23, 2011). That portion of the amendment, which will also take effect on November 1, 2011, changes the standards and distinctions that apply in cases where the defendant was originally sentenced to a term of imprisonment beneath the low end of the then-applicable guideline range. Under the amendment, the general rule in subsection (b)(2)(A) continues to be that the court, in applying a retroactive amendment, shall not reduce the defendant's term of imprisonment beneath the low end of the amended guideline range. Subsection (b)(2)(B), however, provides an exception to that general rule in cases where the government previously moved for a reduced sentence pursuant to §5K1.1, 18 U.S.C. § 3553(e), or Rule 35 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure based on a defendant's provision of substantial assistance to authorities. In those cases, judges

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have the legal authority to sentence the defendant beneath the low end of the amended guideline range, so long as the reduction is not proportionately greater than the reduction initially given the defendant at the time of his or her sentencing. The unofficial version of the §1B1.10 amendment is attached.

The delayed effective date of the Commission's actions will allow time both for congressional review and for prosecutors, defense lawyers, and the courts to prepare in an orderly fashion for the expected motions by inmates seeking a reduction in their sentences. Given the delayed effective date, prosecutors should request that proceedings on any motion filed before November 1 be continued until after that date.

It is important to note that the Commission's decision on guideline retroactivity bears only on application of the guideline amendment it passed to implement the FSA, and not on the statutory amendments contained in the Act. There has been significant litigation over the applicability and effective date of the FSA statutory penalty changes, and the Department will soon issue additional guidance as to how to respond to motions alleging that the FSA's statutory amendments should also be given some retroactive effect.

The Sentencing Commission estimates that as many as 12,000 incarcerated defendants will be eligible for a sentence reduction once the Guideline amendment becomes retroactive. Previous experience suggests that we will receive as many as twice that number of motions from inmates. As we did in 2008 when the crack cocaine sentencing guidelines were first reduced, the Department will work closely with the U.S. Attorney community, the Sentencing Commission, the courts, probation, and the federal defenders to ensure that implementation of the sentence reductions is handled in an efficient and expedited manner. Representatives from the U.S. Attorney community and other components of the Department are already working together to ensure that over the summer all federal prosecutors receive the guidance, legal resources, and training necessary to implement this process as efficiently as possible. Updates will soon be made to the USABook Crack Retroactivity page and additional information will be made available in the coming weeks.

The Department welcomes your input and advice. If you have any questions or concerns you may contact either your designated point of contact within the Criminal Division's Appellate Section or Michelle Morales, Deputy Director, Office of Policy and Legislation, Criminal Division at [REDACTED]

Attachment

Personal Contact Information

This compilation is an unofficial "reader-friendly" version of the amendment to policy statement §1B1.10 (Reduction in Term of Imprisonment as a Result of Amended Guideline Range) (Policy Statement), as promulgated by the Commission on June 30, 2011. Official text of the amendment will be posted on the Commission's website at www.ussc.gov and can be found in a forthcoming edition of the Federal Register. The official text of the amendment also will be incorporated into a forthcoming supplement to the Guidelines Manual.

The amendment does not take effect until November 1, 2011. Until that date, the court should apply §1B1.10 as set forth in the 2010 Guidelines Manual.

AMENDMENT: RETROACTIVITY OF AMENDMENT 750 (PARTS A AND C)

Synopsis of Amendment: *This amendment amends §1B1.10 (Reduction in Term of Imprisonment as a Result of Amended Guideline Range) (Policy Statement) in four ways. First, it expands the listing in §1B1.10(c) to implement the directive in 28 U.S.C. § 994(u) with respect to guideline amendments that may be considered for retroactive application. Second, it amends §1B1.10 to change the limitations that apply in cases in which the term of imprisonment was less than the minimum of the applicable guideline range at the time of sentencing. Third, it amends the commentary to §1B1.10 to address an application issue about what constitutes the "applicable guideline range" for purposes of §1B1.10. Fourth, it adds an application note to §1B1.10 to specify that the court shall use the version of §1B1.10 that is in effect on the date on which the court reduces the defendant's term of imprisonment as provided by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2).*

First, the Commission has determined, under the applicable standards set forth in the background commentary to §1B1.10, that Amendment 750 (Parts A and C only) should be included in §1B1.10(c) as an amendment that may be considered for retroactive application. Part A amended the Drug Quantity Table in §2D1.1 (Unlawful Manufacturing, Importing, Exporting, or Trafficking (Including Possession with Intent to Commit These Offenses); Attempt or Conspiracy) for crack cocaine and made related revisions to Application Note 10 to §2D1.1. Part C deleted the cross reference in §2D2.1(b) under which an offender who possessed more than 5 grams of crack cocaine was sentenced under §2D1.1.

Under the applicable standards set forth in the background commentary to §1B1.10, the Commission considers, among other factors, (1) the purpose of the amendment, (2) the magnitude of the change in the guideline range made by the amendment, and (3) the difficulty of applying the amendment retroactively. See §1B1.10, comment. (backg'd.). Applying those standards to Parts A and C of Amendment 750, the Commission determined that, among other factors:

- (1) *The purpose of Parts A and C of Amendment 750 was to account for the changes in the statutory penalties made by the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010, Pub. L. 111–220, 124 Stat. 2372, for offenses involving cocaine base ("crack cocaine"). See USSG App. C, Amend. 750 (Reason for Amendment). The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 did not contain a provision making the statutory changes retroactive. The Act directed the Commission to promulgate guideline amendments implementing the Act. The guideline amendments implementing the Act have the effect of reducing the term of imprisonment recommended in the guidelines for certain defendants, and the Commission has a statutory duty to consider whether the resulting guideline amendments should be made available for*

retroactive application. See 28 U.S.C. § 994(u) ("If the Commission reduces the term of imprisonment recommended in the guidelines . . . it shall specify in what circumstances and by what amount sentences of prisoners . . . may be reduced."). In carrying out its statutory duty to consider whether to give Amendment 750 retroactive effect, the Commission also considered the purpose of the underlying statutory changes made by the Act. Those statutory changes reflect congressional action consistent with the Commission's long-held position that the then-existing statutory penalty structure for crack cocaine "significantly undermines the various congressional objectives set forth in the Sentencing Reform Act and elsewhere" (see USSG App. C, Amend. 706 (Reason for Amendment)). The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 specified in its statutory text that its purpose was to "restore fairness to Federal cocaine sentencing" and provide "cocaine sentencing disparity reduction". See 124 Stat. at 2372.

It is important to note that the inclusion of Amendment 750 (Parts A and C) in §1B1.10(c) only allows the guideline changes to be considered for retroactive application; it does not make any of the statutory changes in the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 retroactive.

- (2) The number of cases potentially involved is substantial, and the magnitude of the change in the guideline range is significant. As indicated in the Commission's analysis of cases potentially eligible for retroactive application of Parts A and C of Amendment 750, approximately 12,000 offenders would be eligible to seek a reduced sentence and the average sentence reduction would be approximately 23 percent.*
- (3) The administrative burdens of applying Parts A and C of Amendment 750 retroactively are manageable. This determination was informed by testimony at the Commission's June 1, 2011, public hearing on retroactivity and by other public comment received by the Commission on retroactivity. The Commission also considered the administrative burdens that were involved when its 2007 crack cocaine amendments were applied retroactively. See USSG App. C, Amendments 706 and 711 (amending the guidelines applicable to crack cocaine, effective November 1, 2007) and Amendment 713 (expanding the listing in §1B1.10(c) to include Amendments 706 and 711 as amendments that may be considered for retroactive application, effective March 3, 2008). The Commission received comment and testimony indicating that those burdens were manageable and that motions routinely were decided based on the filings, without the need for a hearing or the presence of the defendant, and did not constitute full resentencings. The Commission determined that applying Parts A and C of Amendment 750 would likewise be manageable, given that, among other things, significantly fewer cases would be involved. As indicated in the Commission's Preliminary Crack Cocaine Retroactivity Report (April 2011 Data) regarding retroactive application of the 2007 crack cocaine amendments, approximately 25,500 offenders have requested a sentence reduction pursuant to retroactive application of the 2007 crack cocaine amendments and approximately 16,500 of those requests have been granted.*

In addition, public safety will be considered in every case because §1B1.10 requires the court, in determining whether and to what extent a reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment is warranted, to consider the nature and seriousness of the danger to any person or the community that

may be posed by such a reduction. See §1B1.10, comment. (n.1(B)(ii)).

Second, in light of public comment and testimony and recent case law, the amendment amends §1B1.10 to change the limitations that apply in cases in which the term of imprisonment was less than the minimum of the applicable guideline range at the time of sentencing. Under the amendment, the general limitation in subsection (b)(2)(A) continues to be that the court shall not reduce the defendant's term of imprisonment to a term that is less than the minimum of the amended guideline range. The amendment restricts the exception in subsection (b)(2)(B) to cases involving a government motion to reflect the defendant's substantial assistance to authorities (i.e., under §5K1.1 (Substantial Assistance to Authorities), 18 U.S.C. § 3553(e), or Fed. R. Crim. P. 35(b)). For those cases, a reduction comparably less than the amended guideline range may be appropriate.

The version of §1B1.10 currently in effect draws a different distinction for cases in which the term of imprisonment was less than the minimum of the applicable guideline range, one rule for downward departures (stating that "a reduction comparably less than the amended guideline range . . . may be appropriate") and another rule for variances (stating that "a further reduction generally would not be appropriate"). See §1B1.10(b)(2)(B). The Commission has received public comment and testimony indicating that this distinction has been difficult to apply and has prompted litigation. The Commission has determined that, in the specific context of §1B1.10, a single limitation applicable to both departures and variances furthers the need to avoid unwarranted sentencing disparities and avoids litigation in individual cases. The limitation that prohibits a reduction below the amended guideline range in such cases promotes conformity with the amended guideline range and avoids undue complexity and litigation.

Nonetheless, the Commission has determined that, in a case in which the term of imprisonment was below the guideline range pursuant to a government motion to reflect the defendant's substantial assistance to authorities (e.g., under §5K1.1), a reduction comparably less than the amended guideline range may be appropriate. Section 5K1.1 implements the directive to the Commission in its organic statute to "assure that the guidelines reflect the general appropriateness of imposing a lower sentence than would otherwise be imposed . . . to take into account a defendant's substantial assistance in the investigation or prosecution of another person who has committed an offense." See 28 U.S.C. § 994(n). For other provisions authorizing such a government motion, see 18 U.S.C. § 3553(e) (authorizing the court, upon government motion, to impose a sentence below a statutory minimum to reflect a defendant's substantial assistance); Fed. R. Crim. P. 35(b) (authorizing the court, upon government motion, to reduce a sentence to reflect a defendant's substantial assistance). The guidelines and the relevant statutes have long recognized that defendants who provide substantial assistance are differently situated than other defendants and should be considered for a sentence below a guideline or statutory minimum even when defendants who are otherwise similar (but did not provide substantial assistance) are subject to a guideline or statutory minimum. Applying this principle when the guideline range has been reduced and made available for retroactive application under section 3582(c)(2) appropriately maintains this distinction and furthers the purposes of sentencing.

Third, the amendment amends the commentary to §1B1.10 to address an application issue. Circuits have conflicting interpretations about when, if at all, the court applies a departure provision before determining the "applicable guideline range" for purposes of §1B1.10. The First, Second, and Fourth Circuits have held that, for §1B1.10 purposes, at least some departures (e.g., departures under §4A1.3 (Departures Based on Inadequacy of Criminal History Category) (Policy Statement)) are considered

before determining the applicable guideline range, while the Sixth, Eighth, and Tenth Circuits have held that "the only applicable guideline range is the one established before any departures". See United States v. Guyton, 636 F.3d 316, 320 (7th Cir. 2011) (collecting and discussing cases; holding that departures under §5K1.1 are considered after determining the applicable guideline range but declining to address whether departures under §4A1.3 are considered before or after). Effective November 1, 2010, the Commission amended §1B1.1 (Application Instructions) to provide a three-step approach in determining the sentence to be imposed. See USSG App. C, Amend. 741 (Reason for Amendment). Under §1B1.1 as so amended, the court first determines the guideline range and then considers departures. *Id.* ("As amended, subsection (a) addresses how to apply the provisions in the Guidelines Manual to properly determine the kinds of sentence and the guideline range. Subsection (b) addresses the need to consider the policy statements and commentary to determine whether a departure is warranted."). Consistent with the three-step approach adopted by Amendment 741 and reflected in §1B1.1, the amendment adopts the approach of the Sixth, Eighth, and Tenth Circuits and amends Application Note 1 to clarify that the applicable guideline range referred to in §1B1.10 is the guideline range determined pursuant to §1B1.1(a), which is determined before consideration of any departure provision in the Guidelines Manual or any variance.

Fourth, the amendment adds an application note to §1B1.10 to specify that, consistent with subsection (a) of §1B1.11 (Use of Guidelines Manual in Effect on Date of Sentencing), the court shall use the version of §1B1.10 that is in effect on the date on which the court reduces the defendant's term of imprisonment as provided by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2).

Finally, the amendment amends the commentary to §1B1.10 to refer to Dillon v. United States, 130 S. Ct. 2683 (2010). In Dillon, the Supreme Court concluded that proceedings under section 3582(c)(2) are not governed by United States v. Booker, 543 U.S. 220 (2005), and that §1B1.10 remains binding on courts in such proceedings.

Amendment:

§1B1.10. Reduction in Term of Imprisonment as a Result of Amended Guideline Range (Policy Statement)

(a) Authority.—

- (1) In General.—In a case in which a defendant is serving a term of imprisonment, and the guideline range applicable to that defendant has subsequently been lowered as a result of an amendment to the Guidelines Manual listed in subsection (c) below, the court may reduce the defendant's term of imprisonment as provided by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2). As required by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2), any such reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment shall be consistent with this policy statement.
- (2) Exclusions.—A reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment is not consistent with this policy statement and therefore is not authorized under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) if—

- (A) none of the amendments listed in subsection (c) is applicable to the defendant; or
 - (B) an amendment listed in subsection (c) does not have the effect of lowering the defendant’s applicable guideline range.
- (3) Limitation.—Consistent with subsection (b), proceedings under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and this policy statement do not constitute a full resentencing of the defendant.
- (b) Determination of Reduction in Term of Imprisonment.—
- (1) In General.—In determining whether, and to what extent, a reduction in the defendant’s term of imprisonment under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and this policy statement is warranted, the court shall determine the amended guideline range that would have been applicable to the defendant if the amendment(s) to the guidelines listed in subsection (c) had been in effect at the time the defendant was sentenced. In making such determination, the court shall substitute only the amendments listed in subsection (c) for the corresponding guideline provisions that were applied when the defendant was sentenced and shall leave all other guideline application decisions unaffected.
 - (2) Limitations and Prohibition on Extent of Reduction.—
 - (A) In-General Limitation.—Except as provided in subdivision (B), the court shall not reduce the defendant’s term of imprisonment under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and this policy statement to a term that is less than the minimum of the amended guideline range determined under subdivision (1) of this subsection.
 - (B) Exception for Substantial Assistance.—If the ~~original~~ term of imprisonment imposed was less than the term of imprisonment provided by the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing pursuant to a government motion to reflect the defendant's substantial assistance to authorities, a reduction comparably less than the amended guideline range determined under subdivision (1) of this subsection may be appropriate. ~~However, if the original term of imprisonment constituted a non-guideline sentence determined pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) and United States v. Booker, 543 U.S. 220 (2005), a further reduction generally would not be appropriate.~~
 - (C) Prohibition.—In no event may the reduced term of imprisonment be less than the term of imprisonment the defendant has already served.

- (c) Covered Amendments.—Amendments covered by this policy statement are listed in Appendix C as follows: 126, 130, 156, 176, 269, 329, 341, 371, 379, 380, 433, 454, 461, 484, 488, 490, 499, 505, 506, 516, 591, 599, 606, 657, 702, 706 as amended by 711, and 715, and 750 (parts A and C only).

Commentary

Application Notes:

1. Application of Subsection (a).—

(A) Eligibility.—Eligibility for consideration under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) is triggered only by an amendment listed in subsection (c) that lowers the applicable guideline range (i.e., the guideline range that corresponds to the offense level and criminal history category determined pursuant to §1B1.1(a), which is determined before consideration of any departure provision in the Guidelines Manual or any variance). Accordingly, a reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment is not authorized under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and is not consistent with this policy statement if: (i) none of the amendments listed in subsection (c) is applicable to the defendant; or (ii) an amendment listed in subsection (c) is applicable to the defendant but the amendment does not have the effect of lowering the defendant's applicable guideline range because of the operation of another guideline or statutory provision (e.g., a statutory mandatory minimum term of imprisonment).

(B) Factors for Consideration.—

- (i) In General.—Consistent with 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2), the court shall consider the factors set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) in determining: (I) whether a reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment is warranted; and (II) the extent of such reduction, but only within the limits described in subsection (b).
- (ii) Public Safety Consideration.—The court shall consider the nature and seriousness of the danger to any person or the community that may be posed by a reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment in determining: (I) whether such a reduction is warranted; and (II) the extent of such reduction, but only within the limits described in subsection (b).
- (iii) Post-Sentencing Conduct.—The court may consider post-sentencing conduct of the defendant that occurred after imposition of the ~~original~~ term of imprisonment in determining: (I) whether a reduction in the defendant's term of imprisonment is warranted; and (II) the extent of such reduction, but only within the limits described in subsection (b).

2. Application of Subsection (b)(1).—In determining the amended guideline range under subsection (b)(1), the court shall substitute only the amendments listed in subsection (c) for the corresponding guideline provisions that were applied when the defendant was sentenced. All

other guideline application decisions remain unaffected.

3. *Application of Subsection (b)(2).*—Under subsection (b)(2), the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1) and the term of imprisonment already served by the defendant limit the extent to which the court may reduce the defendant’s term of imprisonment under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and this policy statement. Specifically, as provided in subsection (b)(2)(A), if the original term of imprisonment imposed was within the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing, the court shall not may reduce the defendant’s term of imprisonment to a term that is no less than the minimum term of imprisonment provided by the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1). For example, in a case in which: (A) the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing was ~~41 to 51~~ 70 to 87 months; (B) the original term of imprisonment imposed was ~~41~~ 70 months; and (C) the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1) is ~~30 to 37~~ 51 to 63 months, the court shall not may reduce the defendant’s term of imprisonment, but shall not reduce it to a term less than ~~30~~ 51 months.

If the term of imprisonment imposed was outside the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing, the limitation in subsection (b)(2)(A) also applies. Thus, if the term of imprisonment imposed in the example provided above was not a sentence of 70 months (within the guidelines range) but instead was a sentence of 56 months (constituting a downward departure or variance), the court likewise may reduce the defendant’s term of imprisonment, but shall not reduce it to a term less than 51 months.

Subsection (b)(2)(B) provides an exception to this limitation, which applies if the term of imprisonment imposed was less than the term of imprisonment provided by the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing pursuant to a government motion to reflect the defendant’s substantial assistance to authorities. In such a case, the court may reduce the defendant’s term, but the reduction is not limited by subsection (b)(2)(A) to the minimum of the amended guideline range. Instead, as provided in subsection (b)(2)(B), the court may, if appropriate, provide a reduction comparably less than the amended guideline range. Thus, if the term of imprisonment imposed in the example provided above was 56 months pursuant to a government motion to reflect the defendant’s substantial assistance to authorities (representing a downward departure of 20 percent below the minimum term of imprisonment provided by the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing), a reduction to a term of imprisonment of 41 months (representing a reduction of approximately 20 percent below the minimum term of imprisonment provided by the amended guideline range) would amount to a comparable reduction and may be appropriate.

The provisions authorizing such a government motion are §5K1.1 (Substantial Assistance to Authorities) (authorizing, upon government motion, a downward departure based on the defendant’s substantial assistance); 18 U.S.C. § 3553(e) (authorizing the court, upon government motion, to impose a sentence below a statutory minimum to reflect the defendant’s substantial assistance); and Fed. R. Crim. P. 35(b) (authorizing the court, upon government motion, to reduce a sentence to reflect the defendant’s substantial assistance).

If the original term of imprisonment imposed was less than the term of imprisonment provided by the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing, a reduction

comparably less than the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1) may be appropriate. For example, in a case in which: (A) the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing was 70 to 87 months, (B) the defendant's original term of imprisonment imposed was 56 months (representing a downward departure of 20 percent below the minimum term of imprisonment provided by the guideline range applicable to the defendant at the time of sentencing), and (C) the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1) is 57 to 71 months, a reduction to a term of imprisonment of 46 months (representing a reduction of approximately 20 percent below the minimum term of imprisonment provided by the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1)) would amount to a comparable reduction and may be appropriate.

In no case, however, shall the term of imprisonment be reduced below time served. See subsection (b)(2)(C). Subject to these limitations, the sentencing court has the discretion to determine whether, and to what extent, to reduce a term of imprisonment under this section.

4. *Application to Amendment 750 (Parts A and C Only).—As specified in subsection (c), the parts of Amendment 750 that are covered by this policy statement are Parts A and C only. Part A amended the Drug Quantity Table in §2D1.1 for crack cocaine and made related revisions to Application Note 10 to §2D1.1. Part C deleted the cross reference in §2D2.1(b) under which an offender who possessed more than 5 grams of crack cocaine was sentenced under §2D1.1.*
45. *Supervised Release.—*
 - (A) *Exclusion Relating to Revocation.—Only a term of imprisonment imposed as part of the original sentence is authorized to be reduced under this section. This section does not authorize a reduction in the term of imprisonment imposed upon revocation of supervised release.*
 - (B) *Modification Relating to Early Termination.—If the prohibition in subsection (b)(2)(C) relating to time already served precludes a reduction in the term of imprisonment to the extent the court determines otherwise would have been appropriate as a result of the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1), the court may consider any such reduction that it was unable to grant in connection with any motion for early termination of a term of supervised release under 18 U.S.C. § 3583(e)(1). However, the fact that a defendant may have served a longer term of imprisonment than the court determines would have been appropriate in view of the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1) shall not, without more, provide a basis for early termination of supervised release. Rather, the court should take into account the totality of circumstances relevant to a decision to terminate supervised release, including the term of supervised release that would have been appropriate in connection with a sentence under the amended guideline range determined under subsection (b)(1).*
6. *Use of Policy Statement in Effect on Date of Reduction.—Consistent with subsection (a) of §1B1.11 (Use of Guidelines Manual in Effect on Date of Sentencing), the court shall use the version of this policy statement that is in effect on the date on which the court reduces the defendant's term of imprisonment as provided by 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2).*

Background: Section 3582(c)(2) of Title 18, United States Code, provides: "[I]n the case of a defendant who has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment based on a sentencing range that has subsequently been lowered by the Sentencing Commission pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 994(o), upon motion of the defendant or the Director of the Bureau of Prisons, or on its own motion, the court may reduce the term of imprisonment, after considering the factors set forth in section 3553(a) to the extent that they are applicable, if such a reduction is consistent with applicable policy statements issued by the Sentencing Commission."

This policy statement provides guidance and limitations for a court when considering a motion under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(2) and implements 28 U.S.C. § 994(u), which provides: "If the Commission reduces the term of imprisonment recommended in the guidelines applicable to a particular offense or category of offenses, it shall specify in what circumstances and by what amount the sentences of prisoners serving terms of imprisonment for the offense may be reduced." The Supreme Court has concluded that proceedings under section 3582(c)(2) are not governed by United States v. Booker, 543 U.S. 220 (2005), and this policy statement remains binding on courts in such proceedings. See Dillon v. United States, 130 S. Ct. 2683 (2010).

Among the factors considered by the Commission in selecting the amendments included in subsection (c) were the purpose of the amendment, the magnitude of the change in the guideline range made by the amendment, and the difficulty of applying the amendment retroactively to determine an amended guideline range under subsection (b)(1).

The listing of an amendment in subsection (c) reflects policy determinations by the Commission that a reduced guideline range is sufficient to achieve the purposes of sentencing and that, in the sound discretion of the court, a reduction in the term of imprisonment may be appropriate for previously sentenced, qualified defendants. The authorization of such a discretionary reduction does not otherwise affect the lawfulness of a previously imposed sentence, does not authorize a reduction in any other component of the sentence, and does not entitle a defendant to a reduced term of imprisonment as a matter of right.

The Commission has not included in this policy statement amendments that generally reduce the maximum of the guideline range by less than six months. This criterion is in accord with the legislative history of 28 U.S.C. § 994(u) (formerly § 994(t)), which states: "It should be noted that the Committee does not expect that the Commission will recommend adjusting existing sentences under the provision when guidelines are simply refined in a way that might cause isolated instances of existing sentences falling above the old guidelines or when there is only a minor downward adjustment in the guidelines. The Committee does not believe the courts should be burdened with adjustments in these cases." S. Rep. 225, 98th Cong., 1st Sess. 180 (1983).

** So in original. Probably should be "to fall above the amended guidelines".*