

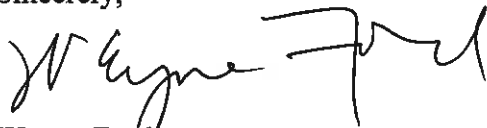
Before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee
"Reevaluating the Effectiveness of Federal Mandatory Minimum Sentences"
September 18, 2013

Statement of Former Iowa State Representative Wayne W. Ford, Des Moines, Iowa

My name is Wayne Ford. As an Iowa State Representative, I was responsible for Iowa being the first state to enact what is known as Minority Impact legislation. This law requires that every criminal justice bill going through the Iowa legislature be evaluated with respect to whether or not it will have a disproportionate effect on specified minority groups – blacks, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, women, and the disabled. Similar legislation has since been enacted in Connecticut and Oregon and is being considered by other states, including Washington, Arkansas, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

More severe criminal penalties for possession of crack cocaine than for possession of an equal amount of cocaine in its powder form were shown to have a disproportionate effect on minorities because minorities were more likely to use it in its crack form. I believe this situation was exacerbated by the application of mandatory minimum sentences in conjunction with the more severe penalties prescribed by the applicable criminal statutes. Accordingly, I urge the Committee to consider the matter of whether mandatory minimum sentences may, per se, have a disproportionate impact on an identifiable segment of society and the adoption of legislation at the federal level comparable to what we have in Iowa, to yield a level playing field for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wayne Ford
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