

# Iowa County Attorneys Association

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May 11, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: S. 2123 – Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Reid,

I am writing on behalf of the Iowa County Attorneys Association in support of S 2123 – the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015. We support the position taken by the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) regarding this legislation. We take this position as a result of the negotiations and the changes that have been made to this bill.

It is imperative that as leaders in the field of criminal justice we work to create a system that not only protects and makes our communities safer, but also a system that is effective and just. Being tough and smart on crime, are not mutually exclusive.

This new bill strikes that balance of protecting our communities from serious and violent offenders, but also provides avenues for rehabilitation and a chance for re-entry into our communities for those that can be safely released. The bill limits retroactivity where applicable, if an individual's record has any serious violent felony. It expands the 3-strike rule to serious violent felonies and ensures that individuals sentenced with prior firearm convictions are treated more severely.

A part of this legislation requires the development of a risk assessment tool to use in determining appropriate programming suited to the inmate's needs and risks. This is an example of using data and research to assist in making these very important decisions.

We truly appreciate the provision requiring an annual report by the Attorney General outlining how savings accrued by these modifications to felony sentencing will be reinvested into efforts by federal, state and local prosecutors and law enforcement to go after drug traffickers and gangs, as well as train and equip law enforcement and prosecutors.

Those of us in the criminal system realize there are limited resources and those resources must be allocated in a way that those individuals that are truly dangerous are incarcerated for an appropriate time and those that can be safely reintegrated into society are given that opportunity.

It is greatly appreciated that this legislation was a result of open communication with NDAA. It serves all of us well, when we can work together on important legislation.

Sincerely,



**Thomas J. Ferguson**  
Executive Director  
Iowa County Attorneys Association

TJF:ska