



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

June 22, 2021

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The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

On behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), a professional organization of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada, thank you for holding today's hearing on the *EQUAL Act*.

There currently is an 18:1 sentencing disparity for federal offenses involving crack versus powder cocaine. Due to this disparity, an individual convicted of an offense involving 28 grams of crack cocaine would face the same mandatory minimum sentence as an individual convicted of a crime involving 500 grams of powder cocaine. Robust policy discussions on eliminating the crack versus powder cocaine sentencing disparity are long overdue, and this hearing is an important step to advance those conversations.

The current sentencing disparity disproportionately impacts communities of color, especially Black men. For example, according to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, in FY 2019, 80.9% of crack cocaine trafficking offenders were men, and 91.9% were Black.¹ 41 states have already eliminated the sentencing disparity at the state level. This includes all but four states where MCCA members are located. Furthermore, of those four states, only one has a sentencing disparity that is higher than the federal disparity.²

As the policy debate on criminal justice reform moves forward, we must ensure that any proposals put forth do not jeopardize public safety. This is especially important given the significant rise in violent crime occurring nationwide. The *EQUAL Act* is an example of legislation that strikes the proper balance, and the MCCA is proud to endorse this bill.

Calgary, Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Montreal, Québec
Ottawa, Ontario
Peel Region, Ontario
Toronto, Ontario
Vancouver, B.C.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
York Region, Ontario

¹ "Quick Facts: Crack Cocaine Trafficking Offenses," *U.S. Sentencing Commission*. <https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/quick-facts/Crack_Cocaine_FY19.pdf>

² "Crack-Cocaine Disparity Reform in the States," *Families for Justice Reform*. <<https://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/Crack-Disparity-in-the-States.pdf>>

The MCCA looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Committee to achieve our shared goal of protecting our communities while ensuring our criminal justice system is fair and equitable for all. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the MCCA can be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Art Acevedo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chief Art Acevedo
Chief, Miami Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association