

August 6, 2018
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Dear Senator Harris:

I am concerned about incarceration. As you know this country is essentially alone in trying to run a society in which nearly one percent of the population is behind bars. This leads to many problems from ex-prisoners being ostracized from work, voting and sometimes entire neighborhoods to disruptions of families and since blacks suffer disproportionately the system reinforces racism both by keeping black individuals and neighborhoods poor (the recent findings on regression of black boys who grow up wealthy sees this as a contributing factor) and by feeding the racist criminal narrative used to attack social spending. The drug panic of the eighties brought us here with minimum sentences having increased the incarceration rate by a factor of six. The past twenty years have seen a bipartisan move to shift sentencing at least back in the direction of every other western country and a move to help integrate people back into society would also be welcome. Unfortunately the 2016 attempt was derailed by Senator Sessions who has now moved his pro-prison agenda to the Justice Department. As you note HR 3356 appears to be an attempt to act without having any effect.

Thank you for calling out HR 3356 as a sham.

I am very proud to be a US resident and a large part of that derives from our government of laws.

Eric Babson