

Presentation from the MOSES Sentencing Project to the CJC on April 22, 2021.

Hello. I am Barbara Benson, and I am a member of MOSES.

As many of you know, MOSES held two very successful Forums in March on sentencing reform. We are advocating for a moderate reduction in sentence length and significant limitation to the period of supervision. We organized the Forums to interact with Judges, Prosecutors and the defense bar to explore what can be changed in the area of sentencing. First, I would like to thank the members of the CJC and other Dane County officials who participated. We've gotten a lot of positive feedback.

Second, for those of you who were not able to view the Forums live, we recorded the two Forums, and I have requested that the links be included in the minutes of today's CJC meeting. We also have provided the link to the MOSES white paper on Sentence Reform in Dane County.

The two Forums were recorded [here](#) and [here](#), and the MOSES white paper on Sentencing Reform in Dane County is [also online](#).

Here are a few highlights from the Forums:

In the first Forum:

Prof. O'Hear, who is the author of *Wisconsin Sentencing in the Tough-on-Crime Era*, provided data to support that in the past several decades incarceration rates in Wisconsin have significantly increased and surpassed the average national incarceration rate. He argued that long sentences in general do not increase public safety.

Prof. Klingele's talk took off from O'Hear's slide that showed that two thirds of the people in prison in WI committed violent crimes. She expanded the audience's view on labeling people as violent offenders.

Both Carl Fields and Ramiah Whiteside from EXPO shared their perspectives based on lengthy periods of incarceration. Many people commented on how valuable it was to hear from people with lived experience.

Following the presentations MOSES asked a panel composed of Judge McNamara, PD Dorl, DA Ozanne, and EXPO Organizer Fields a series of questions starting with "What is your reaction to tonight's presentations and how do you feel about moderately reducing sentences?" All panelists indicated their willingness to engage with other players in the sentencing process and members of the community to explore moderate reductions in sentence and supervision lengths.

In the second Forum:

The panel was comprised of 7 of the 8 Judges on the ballot on April 6th, with the absent judge responding in writing. They each took a few minutes to introduce themselves. Then they responded to questions including their reaction to the first Forum. We appreciated the willingness of all of them to engage in future conversations with members of the community about sentencing reforms. These changes we are proposing will reduce the jail and prison populations, promote public safety, and decrease the harm to individuals, families and our communities.