



League of United Latin American Citizens

OPPOSITION TO EXCESSIVE SENTENCING AND 3 STRIKES

WHEREAS, it is understood that the government may be justified in punishing a repeat offender more severely than a first time offender. We believe that overzealous punishments are counterproductive and we believe that "3 Strikes" laws are overkill; and

WHEREAS, "Tough on Crime Advocates" claim that tough sentences and "3 Strikes" laws have a deterrent effect on violent crime. We disagree because crimes are often committed in anger, in the heat of passion or under the influence of alcohol. The prospect of a life sentence is not going to stop people who are acting impulsively, without thought to the likely consequences of their action; and

WHEREAS, the cost of imprisoning human beings is prohibitively high with the cost of older prisoners averaging three times the amount of younger prisoners; and

WHEREAS, experts tell us that age is the most powerful crime reducer. Most crimes are committed by men between the ages of 15 and 24. Only one percent of all serious crimes are committed by people over age 60; and

WHEREAS, racial bias in the criminal justice system is rampant. African American and Latino men are overrepresented in all criminal justice statistics: arrests, victimizations, incarceration and executions; and

WHEREAS, the Eight Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that; "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;" and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that LULAC members and staff throughout the nation prioritize advocating against harsh and mandatory sentencing, and that we especially focus on the most vulnerable, our immigrant brothers and sisters who are often subject to the harshest penalties because they cannot afford or are not provided appropriate representation, and that LULAC National members and staff advocate for the creation of a Sentencing Oversight Board that will regularly review sentencing throughout the nation to ensure equitable sentencing.

Voted & approved by the National Assembly of the 2017 LULAC National Convention on July 8, 2017.

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President