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EDITOR'S NOTES

Through his first five years in office, President Barack Obama largely ignored his historic clemency powers except for the annual Thanksgiving “turkey pardon” spectacle. But a clemency sea-change began in 2014 when the U.S. Department of Justice encouraged the submission of certain types of clemency applications. The subsequent wave of energy and activities by lawyers and advocates ultimately contributed to President Obama’s decision to grant more than 1700 petitions for commutation and dozens of pardons. But tens of thousands of others had clemency applications denied or closed, and thousands more applications were held over to be handled by the new Administration.

This Issue of the *Federal Sentencing Reporter* brings together commentary from an array of different participants and observers of the remarkable clemency developments that marked the final part of President Obama’s second term. The articles assembled by guest editor Professor Mark Osler, who himself has a long and distinguished record as advocate for modern federal clemency reforms and for individual clemency seekers, provide a thoughtful and reflective look on what he astutely calls “a complex story, and a deeply human one from all perspectives.” The editors of *FSR* are grateful for Professor Osler’s efforts to, in his words, “preserve first-person accounts of those who were close to the action.” The personal stories and reflective analysis in the pages that follow can provide, at best, only a partial window on the myriad aspects and impacts of President Obama’s clemency initiative. But this partial window still brings much light and color to a remarkable set of modern federal sentencing developments emerging from the Executive Branch of our government.

FSR is also honored to welcome back to its pages Judge William H. Pryor, Jr., the Acting Chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission. As part of a special double Issue earlier in this Volume, *FSR* reprinted Judge Pryor’s proposal for federal sentencing reform and published several original reactions to that proposal. In May 2017, Judge Pryor responded to those critics in an address at a conference entitled *Behind the Bench: The Past, Present, and Future of Federal Sentencing*, co-sponsored by the Charles Koch Institute, *FSR*, and the Law & Economics Center at George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School. *FSR* is pleased to continue this important conversation by publishing Judge Pryor’s remarks from that event.



Please send articles and editorial correspondence to:

Publication Manager
Federal Sentencing Reporter
E-mail: berman.43@osu.edu

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Federal Sentencing Reporter Directory

Volume 24 (October 2011–June 2012)

- No. 1 *Sentencing Within Sentencing*
- No. 2 *Federal Child Pornography Sentencing*
- No. 3 *Considering Costs and Other Data*
- No. 4 *Prisoner Rights and Habeas Corpus: Assessing the Impact of the 1996 Reforms*
- No. 5 *The Post-Booker Advisory Guidelines: Problem or Solution?*

Volume 25 (October 2012–June 2013)

- No. 1 *Tracking TRAC's New Sentencing Data*
- No. 2 *Right to Assistance of Counsel: New Developments, Open Questions*
- No. 3 *Risk, Sentencing & Reform*
- No. 4 *Realigning California Corrections*
- No. 5 *Examining the U.S. Sentencing Commission's Latest Federal Sentencing Reports*

Volume 26 (October 2013–June 2014)

- No. 1 *White-Collar Sentencing*
- No. 2 *New Momentum for Federal Sentencing Reform*
- No. 3 *Critical Issues in the Use of Risk Assessments, Prior Record Enhancements, and Probation/Parole Revocation*
- No. 4 *Is the Drug War Ending or Retrenching?*
- No. 5 *Gauging the Enduring Impact of Sentencing Reforms*

Volume 27 (October 2014–June 2015)

- No. 1 *Doing the Right Thing: The Evolving Role of Human Dignity in American Sentencing and Corrections*
- No. 2 *Military Sentencing: Another Federal Sentencing System (Part 1)*
- No. 3 *Military Sentencing: Another Federal Sentencing System (Part 2)*
- No. 4 *The Risk Assessment Era: An Overdue Debate*
- No. 5 *Assessing USSC Amendments to Economic Crime Guidelines*

Volume 28 (October 2015–June 2016)

- No. 1 *Sentencing Reform Distinctly Paced by Congress and the Supreme Court*
- No. 2 *Parole in America & the Status of Federal Sentencing Reform Legislation*
- No. 3 *Sentencing a Decade after Booker*
- No. 4 *Supervision: A Path to Successful Reentry or a Ticket to Prison?*
- No. 5 *Changing Punitiveness*

Volume 29 (October 2016–June 2017)

- No. 1 *Justice Reinvestments*
- Nos. 2-3 *Advice for the New Congress and Administration*
- No. 4 *Sentencing Then ... and Now: Judicial Perspectives on Judicial Perspectives*