

Governor Phil Murphy

# Joint Statement by Governor Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Oliver, Former Chief Justice Deborah Poritz, and President of the New Jersey Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) Jiles Ship on the Urgent Need for Action to Eliminate Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Non-Violent Drug and Property Offenses

02/11/2021

“Three years ago today, we gathered at Messiah Baptist Church in East Orange to constitute the Criminal Sentencing and Disposition Commission after nearly a decade of dormancy. The Commission brought together advocates, law enforcement officials, former members of the judiciary, and legislators to undertake a thorough review of New Jersey’s sentencing laws and recommend systemic reforms to address the racial disparities and inherent inequities woven into the statutory fabric of our criminal justice system.

In November 2019, the Commission released its first report, which offered unanimous recommendations that would constitute a significant step toward addressing the lack of proportionality in New Jersey’s sentencing laws. While several of these proposals were signed into law last year, the most impactful reform recommended by the Commission, the elimination of mandatory minimums for non-violent drug and property offenses, remains stalled. This is particularly disturbing because New Jersey has the dubious distinction of having the nation’s largest disparity in incarceration rates among black and white individuals – at a jarring 12 to 1 ratio.

The elimination of those specific mandatory minimums was agreed to unanimously by the Commission. Nothing should stand in the way of moving forward with these urgently needed reforms. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Legislature to reduce racial disparities in New Jersey’s criminal justice system.”

## Governor Phil Murphy

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