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ATTN: Public Comment

U.S. Sentencing Commission
One Columbus Circle, N.E. #2-500
Washington, D.C. 20002-8002

Dear Sir or Madam:

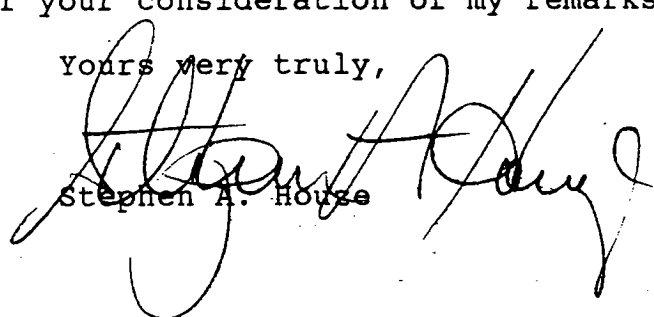
I am writing at this time as a concerned citizen and criminal defense attorney with much experience in the sentencing guidelines. My particular purpose in writing to you is to urge you to seriously consider proposals which have been made regarding the amelioration of the harsh guideline treatment in the area of marijuana possession, cultivation, and sale.

Although Oregon is a federal district in which federal marijuana prosecutions are common, the harsh treatment accorded such offenders under the guidelines is clearly disproportionate. Moreover, the end result of these harsh penalties is to fill our federal facilities with precisely the wrong individuals. Because prison space is such a rare commodity, that space should be reserved for the most serious and violent of offenders in our system. Instead, the system is being filled to overflowing with these generally nonviolent first offenders.

Without attempting to engage in a debate on the merits of the so-called War on Drugs, I would hope that common sense would prevail at the Sentencing Commission regarding this very critical issue.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my remarks.

Yours very truly,


Stephen A. Houze

SAH/cb
cc: Sue Wiswell

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