



Justice Safety Valve Act of 2019

- Allows criminals to be sentenced less than the mandatory minimum sentence for a certain crime.
 - If the court considers the factors pertaining to the certain case imply that a mandatory minimum sentence length would be detrimental to the defendant, then they are allowed to determine whether the defendant deserves a sentence shorter than the minimum
 - If the court wishes to utilize this act, then they must inform both parties before the trial
- This bill does not have a fiscal impact as it simply allows judges to assign sentences below the mandatory minimum.

MAP's Perspective on S. 399

MAP supports this bill because it works to reform outdated practices and preserve justice. We recognize that not every case is the same and thus not every crime should be treated the same way. If a case calls for a shorter sentence than the mandatory minimum then they should be given the shorter sentence. Mandatory Minimums are also frequently misused by the Department of Justice as they are very frequently directed against low-level offenders and force these offenders into unfair plea deals. By giving judges the opportunity to sentence criminals jail time that is less than their mandatory minimum we work to prevent these unfair and discriminatory practices.

Youth Perspective on Criminal Justice

We advocate for the passing of the bill S399, as it offers a chance at reformatory justice since it gives the convicted a chance at giving back to the community. Mandatory minimums cause young adults and juveniles who have been tried as adults to lose a major part of their youth.

They lose their opportunity to college educations and jobs which has lasting effects for the rest of their lives and sets them up for a life in poverty. To advocate for a better practice of restorative justice as well as a chance to live their youth to the fullest, we strongly advocate for the passing of this bill.

The bill also decreases plea deals—a way for the justice system to avoid trials—because there is no fear of high mandatory sentencing.

Catholic Perspective on this Issue

The Catholic Church stands behind bill S399, as it offers a way to address the more complex problems of crime. As stated in the USCCB the Catholic Church is “oppose the additional mandatory minimums—because one-size-fits-all solutions are often inadequate to address the complex causes of crime”. People commit crimes for a different number of reasons and expecting the same mandatory sentencing to be justice for everyone is unreasonable. Mandatory sentencing doesn't take into account the background behind a crime. By allowing a sentence—if deemed necessary—to be given out below the mandatory sentencing the sentence could be changed to fit both the motive and the crime. To advocate for a better form of sentencing as well as the sentencing to match the entirety of the crime, the Catholic Church advocates for the passing of bill S399.