



#JusticeReformNow Capitol Hill Advocacy Day

Formerly Incarcerated Advocate Biographies

Shauna Barry-Scott

In 2005, Shauna Barry-Scott of Youngstown, Ohio was sentenced to more than 17 years for possession with intent to distribute. She was released in November of 2015 when President Obama commuted her sentence. A mother of four and grandmother of 17, Barry-Scott is working in her community with ACTION, Home For Good, United Returning Citizens, Land Bank Board, and The STAR Re-Entry Court. These are programs designed to fight poverty, promote anti-violence initiatives, and help returning citizens assimilate back into society.

Ramona Brant

Ramona Brant was released from prison on February 2, 2016 after her sentence was commuted by President Obama. In 1994, Brant was sentenced to life without parole in Charlotte, North Carolina despite her minor role in a drug ring that she was forced to participate in by her abusive boyfriend. As an advocate, she hopes to bring attention to women in prison who have been convicted of minor offenses.

Norman Brown

Norman Brown was given a mandatory life sentence after being caught up in a nonviolent drug bust in 1990. Granted clemency last summer, Brown advocates for those in prison by working with organizations like the ACLU, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Project New Opportunity, Open Society Foundations, and others by appearing on panels and telling his story. After being in prison for more than 24 years, Norman works part-time at a friend's law firm and is working with youth on a preventive mission to keep them from making poor choices and heading down the road to incarceration. He is enjoying spending time with his family.

Jason Hernandez

Jason Hernandez, from McKinney, Texas, was sentenced to life without parole for a nonviolent drug offense in 1998 at the age of 21. While incarcerated Jason fought his case through the appeals process to no avail. As a result of his knowledge of the law he assisted other inmates in appealing their cases, becoming what is known as a "jail house attorney." In 2011 Jason began a grassroots organization called Crack Open The Door, which advocates for nonviolent people with crack cocaine convictions serving life without parole. In 2013, Hernandez was granted clemency, and released in August of 2015. Since his release, Hernandez has worked at a nonprofit restaurant called Cafe Momentum where he mentors and teaches formerly incarcerated youth how to cook. Hernandez is also a welder, both cooking and welding, which he learned in prison. He still operates Crack Open The Door and continues to have speaking engagements at schools, juveniles, courthouses, and colleges. He is an influential advocate for sentencing reform.



Alton Mills

Alton Mills was charged with being a low-level courier in a federal drug ring. Although his crime was relatively minor, the penalty was severe. Mills' mandatory life sentence became set in stone the very first day he was informed of the charges against him. That was also the day the prosecutor filed an enhancement pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 851 mandating his lifetime of imprisonment. The government contended Mills' two prior probationary sentences for simple crack possession warranted a mandatory lifetime of imprisonment. Prior to his federal life sentence, Mills had never been sentenced to a single day in prison. He was a 23-year old high school graduate from a two-parent family and was young father raising a 19-month old daughter. The sentencing judge, unable to consider any mitigating facts of Mills' life or his minor role in the offense, called the sentence "farcical" and "cruel and unusual." U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, D. Ill., supported Mills' request for clemency. President Obama commuted Mills' life sentence in December 2015. Mills spent 22 years in prison prior to his commutation.

Amy Povah

Amy Ralston Povah is a Clinton-era clemency recipient, drug war veteran and president of the CAN-DO Foundation that advocates for *justice through clemency*. She is also an award winning filmmaker and president of Harm Reduction Productions, a film company that focuses on projects that spotlight the collateral damage of the drug war and why it's important for people to raise their voices to end this horribly destructive policy of punitive madness.

Michael Short

At just 21 years old, Michael Short was sentenced to serve 20 years in prison for a nonviolent drug offense. In prison, Short earned a degree in business management and certificates for personal training and nutrition. His sentence was commuted by President Bush and he returned home in 2007. Short, from Maryland, has testified before Congress on sentencing reform and continues to be an advocate for those serving long sentences due to mandatory minimums.