

UNDERSTANDING DRUG SENTENCING

and its Contributions to Mass Punishment

June 10-12, 2021 | The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTRODUCTION

Discussion of the “war on drugs” frequently fails to examine precisely how drug offenders are sentenced—and how they should be. Drug sentencing practices are implicated in many fundamental criminal justice issues and concerns. Research suggests incarcerating people for drug offenses has little impact on substance use rates or on crime rates more generally. And, despite reports of comparable use rates, people of color are far more likely to be arrested and incarcerated for drug-related offenses than white counterparts. Mandatory minimum sentencing statutes are applied commonly, but inconsistently, in drug cases and for persons with a criminal history that involves drug offenses. And while states have created specialty courts to handle the cases of low-level drug offenders, the efficacy and appropriateness of the “drug court movement” has long been subject to debate.

Distinct state and federal realities complicate our understanding of the relationship between the drug war and punishment. Nearly all federal drug defendants get sent to prison and nearly 50% of the federal prison population is comprised of drug offenders; relatively few state drug offenders are sent to prison and less than 20% of state prisoners are serving time on drug charges. But data on arrests, jail populations, and community supervision highlight the continued, significant impact drug cases still have on state and local justice systems. The role of drug criminalization and sentencing contributes to mass incarceration, yet mass punishment can look quite different depending on the criminal justice system(s) and the drugs.

ABOUT THE CALL

These issues and others related to drug sentencing will be part of a symposium jointly sponsored by the [Drug Enforcement and Policy Center](#) at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and the [Academy for Justice](#) at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. “Drug Sentencing and its Contributions to Mass Punishment,” will

take place on June 10–12, 2021, at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law in Columbus, Ohio. As part of this symposium, we invite scholars to submit papers for inclusion in the workshop scheduled for June 12. Accepted submissions will be paired with a discussant who will review and provide feedback on the paper during the workshop.

Each paper should reflect on some aspect of drug prosecutions and sentencing in the United States. Participants should have a draft to discuss and circulate by May 17, 2021. The papers will be gathered and published in a Spring 2022 symposium edition of the *[Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law](#)*, a peer-reviewed publication. Participants should have a completed version to begin the publication process by August 15, 2021. Final papers may range in length from 5,000–20,000 words.

Deadline for submission is November 1, 2020. Please submit a title and an abstract of no more than 300 words to Jana Hrdinová at hrdinova.1@osu.edu. Accepted scholars will be notified by December 1, 2020.