

FIX WASHINGTON'S 3-STRIKES LAW

STATEMENT AT
<http://fix3strikes.org>

“..... **THEREFORE** we call for reform or repeal of Washington's 3-Strikes law.”

1. American Civil Liberties Union of Washington
2. American Friends Service Committee
3. A. Philip Randolph Institute, Seattle Chapter
4. Black Policy Foundation
5. Center for Social Justice
6. Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites
7. Church Council of Greater Seattle
8. First African Methodist Episcopal Church – Seattle
9. Friends Committee on WA Public Policy
10. Justice Works!
11. King County Kinship Collaboration
12. Lutheran Public Policy Office of WA State
13. Minority Executive Director's Coalition of King County
14. NAACP - Alaska, Oregon and Washington State - Area Conference
15. Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane
16. Religious Coalition for the Common Good
17. Seattle Fellowship of Reconciliation
18. Seattle University School of Law Criminal Justice Society
19. SEIU Healthcare 775NW
20. Seattle Martin Luther King Jr. County NAACP
21. Statewide Poverty Action Network
22. S.T.E.P.S.: Steps to Ethically Profiling Stability
23. The Birth Attendants: Prison Doula Project
24. United Black Christian Clergy Association of Washington State
25. WA Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
26. Washington Christian Leaders Coalition
27. Washington Defender Association
28. Washington State Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice
29. Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation

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WHEREAS approximately 73% of the convictions under Washington's 3-Strikes law are for crimes in the mid to low range of Washington's criminal seriousness scale at RCW 9.94A.515;

WHEREAS Robbery 2, the most common 3-Strikes conviction, and Assault 2, another common 3-Strikes crime, are classified in the *least serious quarter* of criminal offenses at RCW 9.94A.515, carrying standard sentences of 3 months to 7 years;

WHEREAS Washington's 3-Strikes population is approximately 40% African American in comparison with a state population that is less than 4% African American;

WHEREAS Washington's Sentencing Guidelines Commission recommended in 2001 removing Robbery 2 from the 3-Strikes list and examining under what circumstances, if any, should Assault 2 be treated as a strike, as the range of behaviors associated with Robbery 2 and, "probably" some instances of Assault 2 do not rise to the level of most serious offenses and that, specifically, in the case of Robbery 2, these behaviors pose "little risk of physical injury";

WHEREAS bills responding to the recommendations of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission have been in the state legislature since 2001;

THEREFORE we call for reform or repeal of Washington's 3-Strikes law.

Other concerns with this sentence of 777 years, 77 months, and 77 days with No Possibility of Release:

- It falls overwhelmingly on the poor.
- Judges are prohibited from exercising discretion.
- Jurors are prohibited from knowing that a defendant faces 3-Strikes.
- Sentencing Guidelines Commission data indicate that more than a third of 3-Strikers have no convictions for any crimes classified as a Serious Violent Offenses.
- Research shows that other crime control investments result in less crime at less fiscal and social cost.