

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 15, 1999

CONTACT:
Veronique Pluviose-Fenton
(202) 225-2201

MEDIA ADVISORY

WHO: Rep. Maxine Waters, Member of the House Committee on the Judiciary

WHAT: Chairs and moderate an issue forum: **How America's Drug Policies are
Imprisoning our Communities**

WHEN: **THURSDAY, September 16, 1999 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

WHERE: 29th Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Conference
Washington Convention Center, 9th Street and G Street, N.W., Rooms 13 to 15

CONFIRMED PANELISTS:

- Eric Sterling, Esq., President, Criminal Justice Policy Center
- Carmen Hernandez, Esq., The Federal Defender Training Group
- Vincent Schiraldi, Director, Justice Policy Institute
- Ernest Preate, Esq. former Pennsylvania Attorney General
- Julie Stewart, Executive Director of Families Against Mandatory Minimums
- Laura Hankins, Esq., NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (Kemba Smith's lawyer)
- Judge Evelyn Crawford Queen, District of Columbia Drug Court
- Paul Butler, Esq., Visiting Law Professor, University of Pennsylvania School of Law
- William Moffitt, President, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

BACKGROUND:

The so-called War on Drugs has resulted in harsh mandatory-minimum drug sentences and drug conspiracy laws that on the criminal justice system and the communities plagued by drug abuse. This lock-'em-up attitude have resulted in the disproportion incarceration of small level dealers and first-time non-violent offenders.

Conservatives, like Stuart Taylor, called the mandatory-minimum drug sentences "legally irrational and morally bankrupt." Even Chief Justice William Rehnquist of the Supreme Court and Justice Anthony Kennedy have discredited the mandatory-minimum laws. Other conservatives who have voiced their opposition to mandatory-minimum drug sentencing laws are Arianna Huffington, Glenn Loury, and criminologist John Dilulio.