

<http://stopthedrugwar.org/chronicle/439/mayorsvote.shtml>

The US Conference of Mayors, meeting at its annual convention in Las Vegas this week, passed a [resolution opposing mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes](#) and called for "fair and effective" sentencing policies. The group represents the 1,183 mayors of cities in the US with populations over 300,000 and is a key voice in setting the urban policy agenda.

Sponsored by Salt Lake City mayor Rocky Anderson, the resolution notes that this year marks the 20th anniversary of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1986, which established federal mandatory minimums for drug sentences, and that since then, the US prison population has increased dramatically even while mandatory minimum sentencing "has been ineffective at achieving its purported goals: reducing the level of substance abuse and crime, and increasing penalties for the most serious offenders," as the resolution's preamble stated.

"The United State Conference of Mayors states its opposition to mandatory minimum sentencing on both the federal and state levels, and urges the creation of fair and effective sentencing policies that permit judges to determine appropriate sentences based on the specific circumstances of the crime and the perpetrator's individual situation; and that states should review the effects of both federal and state mandatory minimum sentencing and then move forward," read the approved resolution.

The resolution on mandatory minimum sentencing was only one of at least five sponsored by Anderson and passed by the conference, including resolutions calling on the administration to oppose criminalizing undocumented workers, take action on the crisis in Darfur, and help cities embrace alternatives to fossil fuels. Anderson was "the architect" of the conference policies on sentencing and Darfur, said Len Simon, a lobbyist working the convention for Anderson.