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FLOOR DEBATE

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where they are literally having to open geriatric wards in prisons because people are staying there so long and they cannot be paroled; this is when the politicians went to work as is happening with this bill. But nothing can be done because the judges cannot deviate from those sentencing guidelines, as they're called. The judges are asking that they be changed. The hanging judges are asking that they be changed, but the politicians, for whatever reason, will not do so. They're experts. Well, they're not experts. They're the ones who have the hammer so they can wield it any way they choose no matter how much detriment to society, as a whole, or to the criminal justice system. Here is the way a person can get consideration under those sentencing guidelines in terms of getting a reduced sentence. Most by far of the people being sentenced have been involved with drug crimes, not all of them violent; most of them not violent. But if you cooperate with the authorities and you can deliver somebody to them, you can get your sentence reduced. But if you are a street-level dealer or if you are a user who sells drugs to support your habit, you constitute the most disadvantaged group among those involved in drugs. But since you don't know anybody who is of any consequence, you cannot cut a deal. They don't need you if you are a user to point out other users who are selling because they know all of those people already. If you are a nickel-and-dime dealer, they will not let you cut a deal to turn in nickel-and-dime dealers because those people can be replaced and they are known. You're going to have to deliver somebody who will qualify as Mr. or Ms. Big or Semibig. But since you don't have any contact with those people and don't know them, the provisions in the law that will allow a minimization of the sentence to come into play will not work for those who need it the most. Those at the bottom rung of the ladder are the least culpable, do the least damage to society when it comes to drugs. They don't have ships. They don't have airplanes. They don't have millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars to spend to bring in the large quantities of drugs to bribe officials and law enforcements officers. The ones who do that at the top end are the real problems for society, but the victims,...

SENATOR SCHIMEK: One minute.