

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT



Safeguarding Liberty, Justice & the Rule of Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - June 25, 2015

Contact: Larry Akey, Director of Communications, (202)580-6922 [o] or (202)580-9313 [c]
lakey@constitutionproject.org

SAFE Justice Act Includes Many 'Common Sense' Reforms, TCP Says

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Virginia Sloan, president of The Constitution Project, a bipartisan legal watchdog group, offered the following comment on the introduction of the Safe, Accountable, Fair, and Effective (SAFE) Justice Act of 2015, sponsored by Reps. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.) and Bobby Scott (D-Va.):

"This comprehensive new proposal incorporates many of the common sense, consensus-based criminal justice system reforms that TCP's bipartisan policy committees have recommended over the last several years. We commend the sponsors for their responsiveness in engaging with a broad range of criminal justice experts and advocates in developing these proposals, and we look forward to working with them on this important legislation in the months ahead."

Sensenbrenner and Scott led the House Judiciary Committee's Over-criminalization Task Force during the last Congress. The task force held 10 hearings over the course of a year and half, and heard testimony from a wide array of stakeholders, prompting many of the reforms contained in the SAFE Justice Act. Sensenbrenner is also the chair of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations.

The SAFE Justice Act includes a number of reforms that have been strongly recommended by TCP experts, including the need for:

- Services that exonerate the innocent through DNA testing, competent legal services in capital cases, and other provisions in the Innocence Protection Act of 2001;
- The use of best practices to reduce to the risk of inaccurate and unreliable evidence in criminal cases, and notification and remedies for individuals whose cases were tainted by forensic, prosecutorial or law enforcement error or misconduct;
- Federal criminal discovery reform and addressing information disparity in criminal cases;
- Developing best practices for use of body-worn cameras by law enforcement and training on community-based policing; and
- Stronger government oversight and accountability throughout the criminal justice system.

The Constitution Project has convened several blue-ribbon, bipartisan committees on criminal justice reform, including its [Committee on Policing Reforms](#), [Criminal Justice Advisory Committee](#),

[Death Penalty Committee](#), [National Right to Counsel Committee](#) and [Sentencing Committee](#). TCP's committees include former judges, prosecutors, law enforcement and other public officials, as well as victim advocates, defense lawyers and legal scholars. In 2011, TCP coordinated a coalition of more than 40 organizations and individuals representing the leading voices in criminal justice policy to [develop a wide range](#) of bipartisan, cost-effective, evidence-based solutions to address the worst problems in our criminal justice system.

Experts are available for comment. Contact Larry Akey at (202)580-6922 or (202)580-9313.

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[About The Constitution Project](#)

Created out of the belief that we must cast aside the labels that divide us in order to keep our democracy strong, The Constitution Project brings together policy experts and legal practitioners from across the political spectrum to foster consensus-based solutions to the most difficult constitutional challenges of our time through scholarship, advocacy, policy reform and public education initiatives. Established in 1997, TCP is based in Washington, D.C.