

Drug Policy Alliance

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://drugpolicy.org/resource/brief-amici-curiae-support-appellant-cameron-douglas>

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Cameron Douglas, the son of famed actor Michael Douglas, was sentenced in 2010 to five years behind bars for participating in drug distribution. Despite his long-time problem with drug addiction, Cameron was not given any drug treatment in prison. While behind bars, Mr. Douglas relapsed on drugs. He was caught with very small amounts of opioids for personal use, and as a result, the judge added another four-and-a-half years to his sentence. This may be the longest-ever federal prison sentence imposed for the simple possession drugs for personal use behind bars.

Mr. Douglas is appealing this new sentence as excessive and unjust. The Drug Policy Alliance convened a wide array of leading medical and substance abuse treatment authorities to support Mr. Douglas' appeal in a friends-of-the-court brief.

The experts contend that Mr. Douglas' drug relapse behind bars is not surprising, noting the lack of adequate drug treatment in the nation's prisons and jails, particularly for opioid-dependent persons. They urge corrections officials to remedy this situation as a critical step to breaking the cycle of addiction that affects the great majority of persons incarcerated in the U.S.

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