I would like to do a research about “Racial Disparity and Sentencing Reform”. The main question that needs to be addressed is this: What should be done about racial disparities in the sentencing of criminals? I am interested in this because there seemed to be an inequality between the sentencing of blacks, Hispanics and other races as well compared to whites. I would like to find out if the system is unfair against other races or is it too lenient on whites.

Douglas A Berman’s (2004) blogged about an article titled “a move to end disparity along racial lines hasn't worked" authored by John Lewis and Robert Wilkins.  In addition to providing effective background on the Booker/Fanfan story, the piece gives particular attention to the important issue of racial disparity in federal sentencing: rather than reducing unfair racial disparities in federal sentencing, the evidence shows that the guidelines made the problem worse. Just before Thanksgiving, the Sentencing Commission released a report assessing whether the federal sentencing system has achieved the goals of the 1984 reforms. It confirmed what many observers have long known: In the past 20 years, the federal prison population has gotten significantly darker.

He stated that the report also shows that while the average federal prison sentence for black offenders was about five months longer than for whites in 1984, by 2001, the average sentence for blacks was almost 30 months longer.... The report should serve as a catalyst for major discussion about the racial impact of federal sentencing policy, though, to date, it has received scant attention. Of course, data showing vast racial disparities do not necessarily prove that the federal sentencing system discriminates.

Apparently, racial disparity in incarceration has been a moral blight on America from the beginning days of our criminal justice system. The disparity continues despite guidelines and regulations in place to address the issue. And I would like to discuss the two sides of this issue. Does this disparity occur because the law is prejudice against blacks? Or, is the system fair enough, but the number of black criminals that have been sentenced made it seem unfair?

I would like to answer these questions and find out whether we need to fix the system and rewrite the sentencing laws and regulations. Furthermore, I would like to research and find out, if available, what evidence exists that shows the inequality or disparity of sentencing. In addition, I will research how many times this issue has been brought up to our government, and what has been done in the past about it, if any.

Reference

Berman, D. A (2004); Racial disparity and sentencing reform; *Moritz Law;*

[*http://sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing\_law\_and\_policy/2004/12/racial\_disparit.html*](http://sentencing.typepad.com/sentencing_law_and_policy/2004/12/racial_disparit.html)*;* retrieved October 24, 2011