

**VIVIAN HOUGHTON URGES AN END TO MANDATORY MINIMUM
SENTENCING**

Upstart Green Party Candidate for Attorney General calls current system unjust
to the poor and people of color.

MEDIA ADVISORY
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J. Roy Cannon
Committee to Elect Vivian Houghton Attorney General
303.738.9963
jcannon11@comcast.net

Wilmington - - Vivian Houghton, Green Party candidate for the office of Delaware Attorney General and The Green Party of Delaware, in unity with the social advocacy groups Delaware Alliance for Restorative Justice, and Delaware Common Cause, today called for the General Assembly to pass HB 436. The bill was opened to debate in Dover last Thursday, April 18th with a vote expected early this week.

The justice system should serve to restore communities, victims and offenders. Due to mandatory minimum sentencing and the criminalization of substance abuse, our prisons are grossly over-crowded, understaffed and are ineffective in deterring crime, said Houghton. Instead of concentrating millions of taxpayer dollars on putting minor, non-violent offenders in jail, as Attorney General I would refocus energy and resources in funding proven programs of rehabilitation and victim services to achieve real crime reduction in Delaware.

Last year the Green Party of Delaware, led by members Desmond Kahn and Phillip Bannowsky, endorsed efforts to end mandatory minimum sentencing. The party backed efforts by its members to gather petition signatures and otherwise support an end to mandatory minimum sentencing. HB 436 would give discretion to our state's judges to use alternative sentencing that includes substance abuse treatment, education and job skills development as appropriate.

I wholeheartedly support the statement calling on the General Assembly to eliminate mandatory minimum sentencing, recognize substance abuse as a medical and social concern, not a criminal matter, and provide treatment rather than incarceration for non-violent drug offenders, said Phil Bannowsky. Don't be fooled by some poll-driven, retrograde proposal from Jane Brady. Her policies are too costly, they don't work, and the people no longer support them. She could do herself a favor by supporting HB 436 herself.

Even though far more drug use occurs among white people, a hugely disproportionate number of those imprisoned for drug offenses are people of color and the poor. I hope every Delaware citizen will call their representatives today and demand that they support HB 436, Houghton said. Supporting HB 436 will begin the process of putting our criminal justice system back on track and will put people first instead of the interests represented by the prison industry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Committee to Elect Vivian Houghton Attorney General
agcandidate@vivianhoughton.com
<http://www.vivianhoughton.com/vivian>
658-0518

Bob Bohm, Coordinator
Committee to Elect Vivian Houghton Attorney General
239-2572
rebsalerno@msn.com

The Green Party of Delaware
gpde_greenrep2001@yahoo.com
www.gpde.org
(303) 738-9963

Delaware Alliance for Restorative Justice
c/o Delaware Center for Justice
Community Services Building
100 West 10th Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801