



Justice Advocacy Group^{LLC}

Joel A. Sickler
Founder

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Joel Sickler has worked in the field of sentencing and prisoner advocacy for more than 30 years and is the founder of the Justice Advocacy Group LLC in Alexandria, Virginia. He was a graduate fellow at American University's School of Justice in Washington, DC, where he earned a Master of Science in the Administration of Justice.

In the late 1970s, Mr. Sickler worked as a correctional officer at a large maximum-security penitentiary that served the District of Columbia (Lorton Reformatory). Active in the officer's union, it was his idea to promote alternative, community-based sentencing and treatment programs for non-violent, mainly youthful offenders in hopes of curtailing the growth of Lorton's prison population. Less crowded conditions would mean a safer work environment for the union members and fairer conditions for the inmates. The idea gained traction and the DC city council funded related programs. Not surprisingly, Mr. Sickler was notified by his union bosses to cease and desist. He was asked to take the position that the prison population was so dangerous few could be released early or diverted, and the union needed a new contract. After refusing to do so he was given the prison's least desirable work assignments (mainly guarding mentally challenged prisoners in segregation). After witnessing that outcome and numerous atrocities at the prison—including having an inmate die in his arms—Mr. Sickler sought to achieve prison reforms consulting with the DC Parole & Probation offices and through the private sector.

In 1981 he became a case developer with the prestigious National Center on Institutions and Alternatives' (NCIA) Client Specific Planning (CSP) program in Washington, DC. He later became the NCIA's director of client services.

In 2003 he formed the Justice Advocacy Group LLC in Alexandria, VA to aid criminal lawyers and their clients with federal sentencing mitigation assistance and prison advocacy.

Mr. Sickler has prepared over 2,500 evaluations for felony-level defendants facing sentencing in federal courts. He has visited 51 federal prisons and has advised clients with inmate matters in 86 of the Bureau of Prisons' 122 institutions. Based on more than 35 years of experience assisting clients committed to the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), he has extensive knowledge of the BOP and its stated mission, services, policies, program statements, regulations, and institutions.

Mr. Sickler is an associate member of National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and National Legal Aid and Defender Association. He is a founding member of the National Association of Sentencing Advocates & Mitigation Specialists (NASAMS), serving as the organization first Vice President from 1998-2000. He speaks yearly at conferences and seminars for all three associations.

In 2011, he appeared in the Showtime network documentary, *Unraveled*, which featured the pathos of a scheming, prominent NYC lawyer dubbed “mini-Madoff” who was about to be sentenced and imprisoned.

Clients of JAG LLC have included many of the most prominent defendants charged in high-profile federal criminal cases in the US.