



# How Do Judges Decide?: The Search for Fairness and Justice in Punishment

*Cassia C. Spohn*

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*How are sentences for federal, state, and local crimes determined?*

*Is this process fairly and justly applied to all concerned?*

*How have reforms affected the process over the last 25 years?*

Offering a comprehensive overview of the sentencing process in the United States, **How Do Judges Decide?: The Search for Fairness and Justice in Punishment** explores these questions and more. Author Cassia Spohn first discusses the overall concept of punishment and then analyzes individual aspects of it, including the sentencing process, the responsibility of the judge, and disparity and discrimination in sentencing. This Second Edition offers new information on the impact of sentencing reforms, including recent research and case law, updated statistics in tables and figures, and new boxed highlights.

### Key Features

- Helps students understand patterns in the wide discretion and latitude given to judges when determining penalties within the framework of the U.S. judicial system
- Engages the reader with "Focus on an Issue" sections, which analyze key issues such as gender and sentencing (Ch.4) and the impact of race on sentencing for drug offenses (Ch.5)
- Examines sentencing reforms and their impact, providing students with up-to-date information on how punishment is meted out in U.S. courts.
- Contains boxed excerpts in each chapter from books and articles, with a variety of case studies on topics such as the O.J. Simpson murder trial, judicial surveys, and comparison of sentences in different jurisdictions by gender
- Offers new material on specialty courts and the prosecutor's role in sentencing
- Concludes each chapter with discussion questions

**How Do Judges Decide?** is an ideal text for upper-division undergraduate and graduate courses on the judicial system, criminal law, and law and society.



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