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The Editor
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Calling for the cessation of prison sentences of 3 months or less is shortsighted.

Firstly, the best people to determine the appropriate sentence from the available range of sentences are our Magistrates and Judges, that's one of their well practised functions.

Reformists in this area would better serve their cause by addressing the available range of sentences, not by trying to fetter the discretion of the experts.

Other States have weekend and home detention, which in appropriate cases are used as alternatives to prison, and can be linked with supervised work programs.

Again, the notion that short-term prison sentences turn "soft" criminals into "hard" criminals because they associate with other criminals is a bit hard to swallow, given that most people who commit crimes associate together anyway.

Is it seriously being suggested that the removal of the Courts' discretion to impose sentences up to 3 months would somehow reduce criminal disposition; why not 4, 5 or 6 months?

Surely other factors are more relevant, such as addiction to drugs; child abuse, family breakdown, greed, etc etc.

Also for some offenders the shock effect of a short sentence can scare them away from crime; similarly the suspended sentence can work for some. It's a question of what is appropriate for the individual.

Courts mostly use prison as a last resort option, and usually after a number of alternatives have been tried.

Removing the short sentence option may force a Court (having decided that a short prison term was appropriate) to impose a longer than 3 month period, defeating the purpose of the suggested reform.

Playing politics on sentencing achieves nothing positive.

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