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Wednesday's letters: Drug sentencing needs more sense

Since the 1980s, the war on drugs has resulted in stiff minimum mandatory sentences for drug traffickers caught with boatloads of drugs imported from foreign countries. Somehow, the minimum mandatory drug trafficking sentences were amended to include as little as seven prescription pain pills, and people addicted to pain medication after an injury were included in this web meant for big-time drug traffickers.

This has to stop. We cannot economically handle the drain on our society to prosecute and warehouse individuals who simply need drug treatment. These people — our sons, daughters, brothers and sisters — who suffer pain prescription drug addictions can more economically be counseled and treated as opposed to being warehoused in our prisons and labeled convicted felons.

State Reps. Katie Edwards, D-Plantation, and Dave Hood, R-Daytona Beach, and state Sen. Rob Bradley, R-Orange Park, have introduced legislation that raises the quantity of oxycodone and hydrocodone for various minimum mandatory prison sentences. Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, chair of the Criminal Justice Committee, has agreed to support this legislation, with conditions. These legislators should be applauded by the people of Florida for this display of courage and leadership.

Jamie Benjamin, president, Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Fort Lauderdale