

REVIEWING, OBJECTING, AND CORRECTING THE PSR

Why This Is a Critical Moment

Once the probation officer completes a draft of the PSR, there is a short window for review and correction. This is one of the last opportunities you will have to influence the document before it becomes permanent.

Many people underestimate this stage. They skim the report, assume their lawyer will handle it, or focus only on guideline calculations. That's a mistake. While your lawyer is focusing on advocating for you at sentencing, the PSR will have far more lasting implications. Staff members in the BOP, and future administrators will rely upon the PSR to make decisions that influence your quality of life, and your access to liberty through administrative programs. Language in the PSR affects far more than sentencing, and errors left unchallenged often follow you for years.

How the Review Process Works

After the draft PSR is completed, it is typically shared with the prosecution and defense counsel. Each side is given time to review the report and submit objections.

This review is your chance—through counsel—to identify inaccuracies, misleading language, omissions, or assumptions that could cause harm later.

You should read the PSR carefully, line by line, with an eye toward:

- » Accuracy of facts and timelines
- » Descriptions of your role and conduct
- » Characterizations that imply leadership, violence, or risk
- » Statements about substance use, health, education, and work history

If something feels “off,” it deserves attention.

What to Object To—and What Not to Ignore

Not every disagreement is worth raising, but some issues require immediate action.

Pay particular attention to:

- » Overstated roles or scope of conduct
- » Unsupported references to violence or associations
- » Inaccurate drug quantities or loss amounts
- » Mischaracterizations of acceptance of responsibility
- » Errors in health, substance use, or education history

These are the areas most likely to affect classification and programming later.

Working With Counsel Effectively

Your attorney plays a central role at this stage, but they rely on you to identify factual issues. No one else knows your history as well as you do.

Be specific. Point to exact sentences or phrases and explain why they are inaccurate or misleading. Where possible, provide documentation to support corrections.

Effective objections are:

- » Precise
- » Fact-based
- » Supported by records
- » Focused on consequences, not emotion

What Happens When Probation Disagrees

Sometimes probation officers agree to corrections. Other times, they do not.

If the probation officer refuses to make a change, your attorney can raise the issue with the judge at sentencing. The judge may order corrections,



make findings on the record, or address the issue in the Statement of Reasons.

This step matters. Even if the PSR is not amended, judicial findings can help mitigate downstream consequences.

Why Timing Matters More Than Tone

Once sentencing occurs and the PSR is transmitted to the Bureau of Prisons, options narrow dramatically. Requests made later are often denied as untimely or moot.

I've seen people try to fix PSR errors years into their sentence. Almost all were unsuccessful.

That's why this review window is so important. It's not about being argumentative. It's about protecting accuracy while you still can.

Taking This Responsibility Seriously

Reviewing the PSR carefully is not pessimism. It's preparation.

This is your opportunity to make sure the record reflects reality rather than assumption. No one else will protect it for you if you don't engage at this stage.

What Comes Next

In the next lesson, I'll explain the Statement of Reasons, why it matters, and how it can sometimes serve as a critical backstop when the PSR cannot be fully corrected.

Understanding this document gives you one more tool to protect your future.

