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**Trying Kids as Adults: Policies are Changing
New Report Shows Trend of Nearly Half the States Changing or Considering Change**

Washington, D.C. – More than 20 states in the United States have changed or are considering changes to their policies around trying kids as adults according to a new report, *State Trends: Legislative Changes from 2005-2010 Removing Youth from the Adult Criminal Justice System*, released today by the Campaign for Youth Justice.

State Trends highlights the policy changes by examining the impact that the reforms have already had, as well as showcasing states currently contemplating reforms. In the past 5 years, 15 states have changed their state policies and at least another 9 are underway with active policy reform efforts. The report starts with an overview of the major problems that result from trying youth in adult criminal court, and then examines four distinct ways that States and local jurisdictions are changing the politics of youth crime.

In this report we have identified four specific types of trends.

- States and Local Jurisdictions Remove Youth from Adult Jails and Prisons
- States Raise the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction
- States Change Transfer Laws to Keep More Youth in Juvenile Court
- States Rethink Sentencing Laws for Youth

The following states are included in these trends: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. Other states mentioned in the report that are on the horizon for reform are Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wisconsin.

“State policy makers are beginning to understand the research that kids are not adults and need educational and rehabilitative services,” said Neelum Arya, *State Trends* Author and Research and Policy Director for the Campaign for Youth. “*State Trends* documents the ineffectiveness of prosecuting youth in adult criminal court and tracks the trends of returning to the original promise of the juvenile court.”

In the rush to crack down on youth crime in the 1980s and 1990s, many states enacted harsh laws making it easier for youth to be prosecuted in adult criminal courts. Every state allows youth to be prosecuted as adults by one of several mechanisms such that an estimated 250,000 children are prosecuted, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults each year in the United States. In more than half of the states, there is no minimum age limit on who can be prosecuted as an adult. This means that in these states very young children, even a 7-year-old, can be prosecuted as adults.

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The Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) is a national organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating youth under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system.

For more information or to read the report, visit: www.campaignforyouthjustice.org.