

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE TRANSFER OF YOUTH TO THE ADULT CRIMINAL SYSTEM

WHEREAS the historical role of the juvenile court system is to rehabilitate and treat youthful offenders while holding them accountable and maintaining public safety and is therefore better equipped to work with youth than the adult criminal justice system;

WHEREAS youth are developmentally different from adults and these differences have been documented by research on the adolescent brain and acknowledged by many state laws that prohibit youth under age 18 from taking on major adult responsibilities such as voting, jury duty, and military service;

WHEREAS an estimated 200,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year in the United States and most of the youth are prosecuted for non-violent offenses;

WHEREAS most laws allowing the prosecuting of youth as adults were enacted prior to research evidence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention demonstrating that youth prosecuted in adult court are, on average, 34 percent more likely to commit crimes than youth retained in the juvenile system;

WHEREAS youth of color receive more punitive treatment than white youth for the same offenses at all stages in the justice system and the point of greatest disparities is often the decision to transfer a youth to the adult system;

WHEREAS the use of statutes or procedures that automatically exclude youth from the juvenile court without an assessment of individual circumstances by an impartial judge denies youth basic fairness;

WHEREAS it is harmful to public safety and to young offenders to confine youth in adult jails or prisons where they are significantly more likely to be sexually assaulted, physically assaulted, and upon release, more likely to re-offend than youth housed in juvenile facilities; **WHEREAS** youth detained or incarcerated in the adult criminal justice system should be housed in juvenile facilities which have been successful at rehabilitating youth;

WHEREAS most incarcerated youth show symptoms of mental health problems, studies show juveniles in adult facilities may manifest some of the most substantial mental health treatment needs among all juveniles involved in the justice system;

WHEREAS youth sentenced as adults receive an adult criminal record which is a barrier to further education or employment and the collateral consequences normally applied in the adult justice system should not automatically apply to youth arrested for crimes before the age of 18;

WHEREAS youth may receive extremely long mandatory minimum sentences and deserve an opportunity to demonstrate their potential to grow and change;

WHEREAS the monetary value of saving a high-risk youth from a life of crime is estimated to range between \$2.6 and \$4.4 million for each childⁱ and moving youth from the adult criminal justice system to the juvenile justice system is cost-effective;

BE IT RESOLVED that _____ supports the reform of laws, policies, and practices that will reduce the number of youth sent to adult criminal court, remove young offenders from adult jails and prisons, ensure youth sentences account for their developmental differences from adults, and enable youth to return to their families and society without compromising community safety.

ⁱMark Cohen paper: <http://www.youthbuild.org/atf/cf/%7B22B5F680-2AF9-4ED2-B948-40C4B32E6198%7D/Generic%20Report%20on%20Monetary%20Savings%20-%20Final.pdf>

National Organization Supporters as of 2/25/2011

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

American Friends Service Committee

American Jail Association

American Probation and Parole Association

American Youth Policy Forum

ASPIRA Association

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Center for Children's Law and Policy

Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Coalition on Human Needs

Covenant House International

Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators

CURE LIFE-LONG

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Forum for Youth Investment

Global Justice Ministry, Metropolitan Community Churches

Human Rights Watch

International Community Corrections Association

Justice 4 Kids

Justice Policy Institute

Juvenile Justice Policy Group

Learning Disabilities Association of America

Mental Health America

Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center

National Advocacy Center for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National African-American Drug Policy Coalition

National Alliance of Faith and Justice

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of Social Workers
National Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Children
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Youth Law
National Collaboration for Youth
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Crime and Delinquency
National Institute for Law and Equity
National Juvenile Defender Center
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Network for Youth
National Parent Teacher Association
National Partnership for Juvenile Services
National Youth Advocate Program
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
New England Juvenile Defender Center
Reclaiming Futures
Presbyterian Church USA
School Social Work Association of America
Southern Juvenile Defender Center
Southern Poverty Law Center
Southwest Key Programs
The American Civil Liberties Union
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The Salvation Army USA
The Sentencing Project
United Methodist Church, Board of Church and Society
Women of Reform Judaism
Youth Advocacy Programs, Inc.
Youth Homes, Inc.

State Organization Supporters as of 2/25/2011

Alabama

Alabama CURE

Alabama Youth Justice Coalition

VOICES for Alabama's Children

Arizona

Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest

Children's Action Alliance

Episcopal Diocese of Arizona

Maricopa County Juvenile Public Defender Office

Our Family Services

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families

Arkansas Interfaith Alliance

Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind

California

Books Not Bars

Ella Baker Center

Larkin Street Youth Services

Office of Restorative Justice, Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Redwood Community Action Agency

Colorado

Colorado CURE

Colorado Juvenile Defender Coalition

Pendulum Foundation

Connecticut

Center for Children's Advocacy

Collaborative Center for Justice

Connecticut Association for Community Action

Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

Connecticut Parent Teachers' Association

Connecticut Voices for Children

Middlesex Coalition for Children

National Association of Social Workers-Connecticut
National Coalition of Jewish Women—Connecticut Chapter
TeamChild

Delaware

Children & Families First
Jewish Family Services of Delaware
Stand Up for What's Right and Just
The Delaware Center for Justice

District of Columbia

Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute
Children's Law Center
Covenant House
Sasha Bruce Youthwork

Florida

Diocese of St. Augustine Justice and Peace Commission
Florida CURE
Florida Youth Initiative
Pax Christi Florida
Urban Resource Strategists, Inc.

Georgia

Barton Juvenile Defender Clinic, Emory University School of Law
Georgia Rural Urban Summit

Hawaii

Community Alliance on Prisons

Idaho

Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Illinois

Black Network In Children's Emotional Health
Child Care Association of Illinois
Civitas Child Law Center, Loyola University
Griffin Center - East St. Louis
Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative
YWCA Quincy

Indiana

Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force, Inc.

Iowa

Iowa Coalition 4 Juvenile Justice

Kentucky

Central Juvenile Defender Center

Children's Law Center of Kentucky

Louisiana

Capital Post Conviction Project

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children

Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana

Maine

Child Protection & Juvenile Justice Section of the Maine State Bar

Juvenile Justice Clinic, University of Maine School of Law

Maine Children's Alliance

Maryland

Community Law in Action

Public Justice Center

Massachusetts

Citizens for Juvenile Justice

New Vision Organization, Inc.

Youth Advocacy Department

Michigan

Association for Children's Mental Health

Michigan Collaborative for Juvenile Justice Reform

Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency

Michigan Federation for Children and Families

Minnesota

Children's Law Center of Minnesota

Elim Transitional Housing, Inc.

Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.

Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies

Mississippi

Mississippi Youth Justice Project

Missouri

Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province

Montana

Mental Health America of Montana

Nebraska

Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada

National Association of Social Workers, Nevada Chapter

New Jersey

New Jersey Parents Caucus

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey

New Mexico

Community Action New Mexico

New Mexico Conference of Churches

New Mexico Council on Crime and Delinquency

New Hampshire

New Futures

New York

Center for Community Alternatives

Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions at Medgar Evers College

Church Women United of Chemung County

Church Women United of NYS

Correctional Association of New York

Court St Joseph #139 Catholic Daughters of the Americas

Chemung County Council of Women

Chemung County Council of Churches

FIERCE NYC

Ladies of Charity of Chemung County

Mothers on the Move

Past Regents Club Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Diocese of Rochester

Pomona Grange #1

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Inc.

Urban Word NYC

Veteran Grange #1108

Youth Represent

North Carolina

Action for Children North Carolina

Juvenile Justice Clinic of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Law

Ohio

Children's Defense Fund – Ohio

Juvenile Justice Coalition (of Ohio)

The Office of the Public Defender – Ohio

Voices for Ohio's Children

Oregon

Human Services Coalition of Oregon

Juvenile Rights Project

Partnership for Safety and Justice

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Rhode Island

Parent Support Network of Rhode Island

Texas

Texans Care for Children

Virginia

Just Children

Legal Aid Justice Center

Offender Aid of Restoration

Virginia Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Virginia CURE

Washington

Citizens for Responsible Justice

West Virginia

Daymark

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Wyoming

Wyoming's Children Action Alliance