



BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2011

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**More than 1,300 Call on Administration to Halt
Placing Youth in Adult Jails and Prisons**
Cite concerns over safety and well-being of youth

Washington, D.C. – In response to a call for public input on proposed regulations on the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), more than 1,300 organizations and individuals called on the U.S. Department of Justice to ban the placement of youth under 18 in adult jails and prisons. Signatories on the letter, representing every state in the nation, include hundreds of directly affected youth, parents and families; dozens of state and local elected officials; juvenile & criminal justice professional associations; crime victims' and survivor groups; children's advocacy groups; civil and human rights groups; mental health advocates; and faith-based organizations.

"In light of the overwhelming research demonstrating the extreme risks youth face in adult jails and prisons, we are calling on the U.S. Department of Justice to implement these standards without delay and to ensure that these standards ensure the removal of youth from adult jails and prisons," says Neelum Arya, Research and Policy Director for the Campaign for Youth Justice and one of the authors of this response.

Numerous leading experts in juvenile and criminal justice signed the letter including Allen Breed, former Director of the National Institute of Corrections; Bart Lubow, Director of the Juvenile Justice Strategies Group at the Annie E. Casey Foundation; Todd Clear, Dean of Rutgers University and a former President of the American Society of Criminology; Terence Hallinan, former District Attorney of San Francisco; Ron Angel, Director of the Division of Youth Services for the state of Arkansas; The Honorable Michael Corriero (retired judge); The Honorable Ted Rubin (retired judge); Shay Bilchik, former Administrator of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and current director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University; Professor Charles Ogletree, Harvard Law School; and Eli Lehrer, Vice President of the Heartland Institute.

The letter states that over 10,000 youth are at risk in adult jails and prisons on a daily basis, and youth in adult facilities are at the greatest risk of prison rape of all inmates. According to research by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 21% and 13% of all substantiated victims of inmate-on-inmate sexual violence in jails in 2005 and 2006 respectively were youth under the age of 18. The response also cites research that youth are 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult jail than in a juvenile detention facility.

The letter references the policy statements and guidelines from leading professional associations in the field, such as the American Bar Association, the American Correctional Association, the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care, and National Juvenile Detention Association, which have all recognized that juveniles have distinct physical, emotional, social, and safety needs that are different than those of adults, and have adopted policy statements and guidelines calling for youth to be housed in different settings than adult prisoners.

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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.

The letter is available at: http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/PREA_Sign-on_Letter.pdf

For more information, visit: www.campaignforyouthjustice.org.