

CAMPAIGN FOR
YOUTH JUSTICE
 BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

March 2010 Newsletter

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

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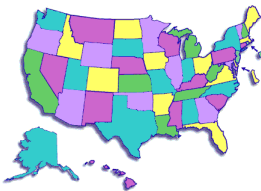
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ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Pardon for Qing Hong Wu!

In CFYJ's February Newsletter, we asked readers to sign and circulate an online petition to New York Governor Paterson in support of pardoning Qing Hong Wu, a man who had been prosecuted and convicted as an adult when he was fifteen and was awaiting deportation. In case you did not see the news, Governor Paterson pardoned Mr. Wu on March 6, 2010! His family is jubilant and very thankful for your support. Check out the links below covering the good news.

- <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/07/nyregion/07pardon.html?emc=eta1>
- <http://readme.readmedia.com/GOVERNOR-PATERSON-PARDONS-QING-HONG-WU/1186>
- http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/gov_pardon_for_immigrant_who_turned_4bmXCj7RPKZc

DC Lawyers for Youth Launches New Youth Justice Project

DC Lawyers for Youth recently launched the Youth Justice Project (YJP), a new initiative to convene youth community stakeholders in Washington, DC to collectively advance a proactive youth justice agenda, promote successful juvenile justice reforms, and increase positive youth media coverage in the District.

YJP will bring together youth-serving and direct-service organizations, DC government agencies, youth, and parents. To advance a youth justice agenda, YJP will prioritize its efforts in the following juvenile justice issues: 1) community-based alternatives to incarceration, 2) pretrial detention alternatives, and 3) juvenile transfer to the adult criminal justice system.

The initiative will devise and implement a proactive media strategy to increase positive District-wide media coverage of youth, youth issues, juvenile justice issues, and ongoing juvenile justice reforms in the District. Finally, YJP plans to collect and organize existing data on youth justice issues into a series of fact sheets as well as promote data collection and the undertaking of new youth justice research projects by government and non-research organizations.

For more information on the Youth Justice Project, visit DC Lawyers for Youth's website at www.dcly.org.

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FROM THE HILL



JJDPA Reauthorization Needs Your Support!

As we get closer to election season, more voices are needed for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) reauthorization to move through Congress! S. 678, the Senate JJDP reauthorization bill, currently has 12 bipartisan co-sponsors and in December 2009 was successfully passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. However, S. 678 now needs to come to the floor for a full vote and we need the House to move a bill through their chamber.

Action Item: Tell your Representative in the House and your two Senators in the Senate to take action on JJDP reauthorization! Send letters using the links below.

- House:
http://www.change.org/campaign4youthjustice/actions/view/tell_the_house_pass_juvenile_justice
- Senate:
http://www.change.org/campaign4youthjustice/actions/view/tell_the_senate_pass_juvenile_justice

House Education and Labor Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

Erin Davies

On March 11, the House Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities held a hearing entitled "Meeting the Challenges Faced by Girls in the Juvenile Justice System." The hearing was led by Subcommittee Chairwoman Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) and attended by Representatives Polis (D-CO), and Conaway (D-TX).

The hearing focused on how girls fare in the juvenile justice system and what changes can be made to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) to improve girls' treatment in the juvenile justice system. 'Healthy Families and Communities Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the JJDP A. During the hearing, several witnesses testified, including:

- **Professor Francine Sherman:** Clinical Professor and Director, Juvenile Rights Advocacy Project, Boston College Law School, Newton, MA
- **Rachel Carrion:** Board Member, Community Connections for Youth, New York, NY
- **The Honorable J. Brian Huff:** Jefferson County, Birmingham, AL
- **Professor Linda A. Teplin:** Director, Psycho-Legal Studies Program, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL
- **Gary Ivory:** Southwest President and National Director of Program Development, Youth Advocate Programs, Harrisburg, PA
- **Cameron Romer:** York County Probation Officer, York, PA

CFYJ worked closely with Rachel Carrion on her incredibly brave testimony, which sent a powerful message that girls can face many dangers in juvenile justice facilities, including physical and sexual abuse from peers and staff. Ms. Carrion spoke eloquently on the effects juvenile justice system involvement had on her and asked that the Committee ensure that other girls would not have to go through what she experienced to get help.

Each of the witnesses' testimony as well as video and pictures from the hearing can be found at <http://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/healthy-families/>.

Obama Administration Releases Budget for Fiscal Year 2011

Erin Davies

In February, the Obama Administration released its budget for the federal government for fiscal year 2011. President's budget is the first step in the federal appropriations process and serves as a signal of what federal programs are a priority to the Administration.

Although the overall funding numbers for children-focused federal programs increased, overall funding for juvenile justice programming decreased. In the President's budget, the Administration proposed cutting core juvenile justice programs, such as: a \$3 million cut to Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) Title II state formula grants which supports JJDP A's core requirement of supporting states in their efforts to implement comprehensive state juvenile justice plans; a \$3 million cut to JJDP A Title V grants which provide funding for community-based delinquency prevention efforts; and a \$15 million cut to the Juvenile Account Block Grant (JABG) program which provides funding for systemwide improvements to the juvenile justice system. The budget also did not include funding for administrative costs of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and eliminated funding for JJDP A, Part E which awards grants for developing, testing and demonstrating new initiatives and programs for the prevention, control or reduction of juvenile delinquency. Much of the funding for demonstration grants was earmarked in prior years.

However, the President's budget did include three new juvenile justice programs: a \$13 million National Juvenile Delinquency Court Improvement Program, a \$12 million Gang and Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Initiative, and an \$806,000 Disproportionate Minority Contact Evaluation and Pilot Program. Although the new programs address areas where juvenile justice research is needed, we are concerned that the core juvenile

justice programs have been cut.

Despite the guidelines of the President's budget, both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate r pass appropriations bills to fund federal programs. These bills can include higher or lower amounts than th President requested.

More information on the President's budget can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>. I upcoming weeks, First Focus, a national bipartisan children and families advocacy organization, will release annual Children's Budget book. This guide will contain information and analysis on the President's 2011 bu and can be accessed at http://www.firstfocus.net/pages/3484/Federal_Budget.htm when it is released.

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RESEARCH AND POLICY

ABA Passes New Resolution to Reduce Collateral Consequences from Court

Contact

Roger Ghatt

The American Bar Association (ABA) recently passed a new policy resolution encouraging efforts to reduce the collateral consequences from court contact on youth. Court involvement as a young person, regardless of whether it results in adjudication, an adult conviction, or no conviction, can have a detrimental effect on the rest of the youth's life. "Court-involved children face numerous obstacles imposed by law that adversely impact their attempts to successfully return to their communities," ABA Juvenile Justice Committee co-chair Lawrence Wojcik stated.

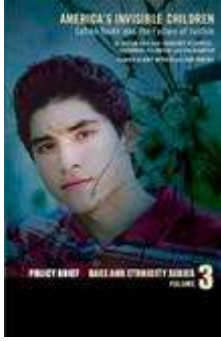
The ABA hopes to reduce the collateral consequences of youth court involvement through its new resolution which urges the business, education, and government sectors to refrain from placing additional barriers that are not mandated by law in the path of children. "The policy embraces the idea that the best way to help such children is to embrace their return to the community by offering them every opportunity to succeed," said Wojcik.

CFYJ national spokesperson, R. Dwayne Betts, who participated in an initial meeting of the ABA Juvenile Justice Committee, commented on the increased difficulty for juveniles to reenter society as a result of contact with the justice system. "There is no doubt in my mind that an important factor in the recidivism rates among juveniles is the collateral consequences of incarceration. After release, juveniles are often barred from attending universities and obtaining employment." Betts continued on to offer his support for the new resolution. "The American Bar Association's recent policy on juveniles looks to change policies of discrimination that are more a detriment to public safety than an aid. I applaud the ABA - it's not just that this is the right decision, it's a decision that is backed by evidence showing an education and job opportunities increase the chance of success for a person who has had contact with the justice system."

The text of the ABA's new resolution can be found at <http://www.abanet.org/crimjust/policy/midyear2010/102a.pdf>.

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NATIONAL MOMENTUM



Summits Highlight the Involvement of Latino Youth in the Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems

Jessica Sandoval

On February 18 and 20, US Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) sponsored "The Latino Summit 2010: Improving the Lives of Nevadans." The events, held at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas and the University of Nevada in Reno, provided an opportunity for local and national Latino leaders to discuss and collaborate on a range of issues affecting Nevada's Hispanic community. A host of issues were discussed, including juvenile justice. Panelists included representatives from CFYJ, 2010 Census, and the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence.

At the summits, Neelum Arya, Research and Policy Director for the Campaign for Youth Justice, discussed the findings of *America's Invisible Children: Latino Youth and the Failure of Justice*, a recent policy brief she authored about Latino youth in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. She stressed the importance of Latino involvement in juvenile justice reform efforts because on any given day there are over 18,000 Latino youth incarcerated in America for nonviolent offenses and one out of every four (24%) is held in either an adult prison or jail where there is significant danger of suicide and rape. Latino youth are treated more harshly than white youth for similar offenses at all stages of the justice system, and the most severe disparities occur for Latino youth tried in the adult system in which Latino children are 43% more likely than white youth to be waived to the adult system and 40% more likely to be admitted to adult prison.

The policy brief highlighted at the summit, *America's Invisible Children: Latino Youth and the Failure of Justice* provides the latest facts about Latino youth in the US justice systems and highlights promising solutions and policy recommendations to reduce disparate treatment of system-involved Latino youth. The brief is available at <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/key-research/policy-briefs.html>.

Campaign for Youth Justice Launches New Resolution

Roger Ghatt

The Campaign for Youth Justice continues to promote its recently released and revised National Resolution aimed at reducing the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth in the adult criminal justice system. The new resolution has updated research and includes important information about the developmental differences between adolescents and adults.

Despite research documenting the developmental differences between young people and adults, many states have statutes or procedures that automatically prosecute youth in the adult system without an individualized assessment by an impartial judge. Such procedures deny young people basic fairness and ignore research on the adolescent brain which demonstrates that youth are not fully equipped to make reasoned judgments and handle major adult responsibilities.

When young offenders are confined in adult jails and prisons, they are more likely to be sexually and physically assaulted. While most incarcerated youth show symptoms of mental health problems, studies show that youth in adult facilities manifest some of the most substantial mental health treatment needs of all system-involved youth. Moreover, youth of color, who already receive more punitive treatment than white youth for the same offenses at every stage of juvenile proceedings, are more likely to be transferred to the adult system.

Prosecuting youth in the adult system is a pathway to recidivism, abuse, and long-term negative consequences on the mental health and educational needs of youth. It is a dangerous and costly practice.

CFYJ is asking organizations and individuals to consider signing-on to the National Resolution to end the prosecution of youth as adults. To sign-on to the resolution contact the Campaign at jjstate@cfyj.org or call 202.558.3580.

The text of the National Resolution is available at http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/documents/cfyj_resolution210.pdf.

CFYJ Presents on Juvenile Justice and Transfer Issues at Various International, National, and Local Conferences

Erin Davies

During spring 2010, CFYJ has been and will be presenting on federal juvenile justice issues, including the prosecution of youth in adult court, to a wide variety of juvenile justice system stakeholders. Below is a list of the conferences at which CFYJ has spoken to or is scheduled to speak.

- **March 9th** - National Association of Counties (NACo)
- **March 10th** - Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- **March 17th** - The National Crittenton Foundation
- **March 19th** - Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center Symposium on Juvenile Justice
- **March 23rd** - International Community Corrections Association
- **March 30th** - Correctional Education Association
- **May 14th** - Young Elected Officials Network, A Program of People For the American Way Foundation

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MEDIA WRAP



Tune in TOMORROW: *Juvenile Justice Matters* Meets *American Idol*

Eric Solomon

TOMORROW, *Juvenile Justice Matters*, will talk with *American Idol* contestant and juvenile justice advocate, Matt Lawrence. You won't

want to miss this show! Matt was an honors student and captain of his high school football team when he robbed a bank with a BB gun. This was his first offense and he spent several years in the Texas juvenile justice system. An offense like his could have given him an automatic adult sentence, but he was fortunate to stay in the juvenile system. He earned his GED and high school diploma and took college courses. Matt was able to turn himself around and audition in Orlando for *American Idol* this season. Most likely, none of this would have been possible had Matt been prosecuted as an adult.

To listen to our conversation with Matt Lawrence, tune in to *Juvenile Justice Matters* on Thursday, April 1 at 4:30 p.m. EST at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/jjmatters>. For more information on Matt's life and *American Idol* experience, visit <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20100307/articles/3071012>.

Juvenile Justice Matters Learns about Youth Inside a New York County Jail

Eric Solomon

This month, CFYJ's radio show, *Juvenile Justice Matters*, spoke with David Chura, author of the newly released book *I Don't Wish Nobody to Have a Life Like Mine: Tales of Kids in Adult Lockup*. Chura taught high school for ten years in a New York county jail and saw first hand the effects that harsh sentencing laws have on youth incarcerated as adults. Through his book, he introduces the reader to the children behind the laws, their families, wardens, correctional officers, and doctors and weaves their stories together to show the vivid consequences of placing youth in the adult justice system. Listen to our conversation with him at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/jjmatters>.

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GET ORGANIZED

Where are the Leaders?

Grace Bauer

"Salvation for a race, nation or class must come from within. Freedom is never granted; it is won. Justice is never given; it is exacted and the struggle must be continuous for freedom is never a final fact, but a continuing evolving process to higher and higher levels of human, social, economic, political and religious relationship."

~A. Phillip Randolph

This quote comes from a man many of us don't even remember when we think about the history lessons of our childhood. I was fortunate to have a brilliant friend share this with me some years ago. At the time, I believed we would see significant changes to juvenile and criminal justice policies in the deep rural South simply because the time was right and it was the right thing to do. Yet, when the day was over, nothing had changed. She quietly said, "Freedom is never granted; it is won."

All the research and evidence shows that it isn't smart to treat children as adults, especially in the adult criminal justice system. We know that it creates more problems than it solves. We know that it puts these children at great risk, physically and emotionally. Charging,

trying and sentencing children as adults destroys the lives of the children involved and their families as well as the communities they hail from. The policy affects youth of color disproportionately and continues to erode the frail infrastructures of communities of color. These are facts with well-documented processes and outcomes. Educated people in positions of authority and influence understand this. Why, then, do these policies remain the same?

"Justice is never given; it is exacted and the struggle must be continuous for freedom is never a final act, but a continuing evolving process...." For justice to be had for our children, particularly for poor and/or children of color, there must a struggle for freedom. There must be public education that leads to public outrage and public outcry. Ultimately, there must be leaders to embrace the struggle and organize the outrage and transform it into a movement that can bring change.

Leaders come with the paper and pencils and talk about what to do next to stop the problem. Leaders seek out the strengths of those in the room and empower them to use their skills in the struggle for freedom. Leaders speak out when others remain silent. Leaders bring forth the truth of those they lead and look for solutions and ways to serve needs in a better and changing world. The greatest leaders I have known are the ones that never stop calling for something better for all of us.

The time for juvenile justice reform and change is here. The evidence is in, but without leaders, this time will pass as many others have. Where are the leaders? When will they step forward? Are you a leader? Do any of the tasks in the above paragraph represent something you are doing today? If so, then perhaps you should stop looking for a leader and stand up, for "Salvation for a race, nation or class must come from within."

As the families most affected by transfer policies, we want things to change, we expect better for our children and communities. Yet, we continue to expect it to change without us or with us sitting on the sidelines. As time progresses, it may well change but will it change for the better? I believe the answer to this question is "no." We must stand up, let our truths and experiences be heard far and wide, and bring our stories to people that would rather we remain silent. We must demand better for our children and hold those in authority accountable for the future of our children and communities. If you choose to stay out of the struggle, let others fight for you, and hope for the best, then I too will say quietly "Freedom is never granted; it is won."

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VOICES

David



David grew up in Bristol, CT. David's father was an alcoholic who regularly abused his mother, both verbally and physically, in front of their children. When David was nine, his parents divorced and the family court became involved in a custody dispute. David went from his mother's home to his father's. While in his father's care, David began to act out. He was evaluated and diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, prescribed medication for the condition, and returned to his

mother's care. As a result of emerging mental health conditions and his familial stressors, David was hospitalized repeatedly and, as a result of a neglect case, was placed under Department of Children and Families (DCF) guardianship at age 10.

David's resentment towards his father compounded his limited cognitive ability and he grew easily frustrated with tasks. He underwent several inpatient evaluation and treatment interventions and, at age 14, was placed in a residential treatment facility by DCF. Accurately diagnosed with bipolar disorder and severe depression, he received the therapeutic structure and schooling he needed while in residential care. David became a leader among his peers, experiencing both physical and psychological benefits. His mother visited whenever possible and participated actively in his treatment regimen. To his detriment, however, DCF discontinued payment for this placement, deeming it too expensive. David hoped he would be placed in a therapeutic foster home, but his age made him difficult to place.

Instead, David was sent to a group home in New Haven, CT. According to his mother David was taunted by staff and encouraged to run away. Eventually, he did just that. David was subsequently placed in another group home but was threatened by a resident with a gun and ran away again. He went to his mother's home and she took him to the hospital to receive an updated evaluation. DCF rejected his request to return to a prior placement, opting to take him back to the same group home where his life had been threatened. While being transported, David jumped out of the moving vehicle.

While in ascendance, David left the group home was arrested for stealing, released, and placed on probation to comply with his family court order. Complying with DCF was one of the restrictions placed on him under probation. However, David exercised his civil right as a 16-year-old to remove himself from DCF services, prompting probation violation proceedings in his criminal case. While awaiting his revocation hearing, David was held at Manson Youth Institute (MYI). On July 24, 2005, after four months of confinement, compounded by the onset of severe depression and with no mental health intervention, he took his life by hanging himself with a bed sheet in his cell. David was 17 years old.

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ON THE CALENDAR



April 23 - 25

CFYJ's "Join the Movement" campaign encourages youth, parents, and allies across the country to raise awareness about the prosecution of youth as adults on Global Youth Service Day (GYSD), April 23 - 25. GYSD, an annual international campaign, celebrates and mobilizes children and youth to improve their communities. As part of GYSD this year, juvenile justice advocates are invited to host an event which highlights how youth are treated in the justice system and what people can do in their own communities to spread the word. We hope you will participate! Ways you can raise awareness on GYSD include:

- Hosting film screenings of "Childhood Interrupted," a 20 minute film documenting the negative impacts of prosecuting youth in the adult criminal justice system. To view the film, click here: <http://cfyj.blip.tv/>.

- Serving as a "Join the Movement" site where youth, parents and allies can obtain free Join the Movement "Take Action Kits," bracelets, and pins to get started on launching a local youth justice campaign; and
- Participating in online actions through Campaign for Youth Justice's website, www.campaignforyouthjustice.org, and Facebook Fan Page. You can participate in "Join the Movement" wherever you are!

Over 200,000 youth are prosecuted in the adult criminal justice system every year and over 10,000 youth are in adult jails and prisons on any given day. Help us raise awareness and spread the word! If you are interested in hosting a film screening, serving as an action site, or signing up as an "online" volunteer, please contact CFYJ at jointhemovement@cfyj.org.

For updates on the CFYJ's participation in GYSD, visit <http://www.gysd.org/events/2010/us/dc/campaign-youth-justice-join-movement>.

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TAKE ACTION, SPREAD THE WORD

Urge your Representative and Senators to act on JJDPa Reauthorization! Use the links below to send letters.

- House:

http://www.change.org/campaign4youthjustice/actions/view/tell_the_house_pass_juvenile_justice

- Senate:

http://www.change.org/campaign4youthjustice/actions/view/tell_the_senate_pass_juvenile_justice

Sign-on to the National Resolution against the prosecution of youth as adults. Email jjstate@cfyj.org to act or your organization's name.

Participate in Global Youth Service Day, April 23-25. Sign up to help raise awareness by emailing jointhemovement@cfyj.org.

Ask North Carolina leadership to "Raise the Age" of juvenile court jurisdiction. Send a letter at http://www.change.org/actions/view/get_children_out_of_the_adult_system_justice_for_juveniles.

Encourage parents and families who have been directly affected by punitive policies that try youth as adults. National Parent Caucus at <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/parents-resource-center/local-parent-g-listing.html>.

Follow CFYJ on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/justiceforyouth>.

Send your story of a youth tried as an adult or refer a friend to participate in the Case Profiles Project at <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/tell-us-your-story.html>.

Listen to the upcoming April 1 episode of the *Juvenile Justice Matters* radio show with *American Idol* contestant Lawrence at <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/jjmatters>.

Join the Campaign for Youth Justice on [Facebook](#) and connect with hundreds of advocates across the cou

Visit the Campaign's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/jjreform>.

Read JJ Today, *Youth Today's* blog on juvenile justice at <http://youthtoday.org/talk/comments.cfm?topic=>

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

The momentum for change must continue! With your help, we can expand grassroots campaigns on the ground in new states to show support for reform.

To launch grassroots campaigns in new states in 2010, we have initiated the "10 by 10" Campaign to raise \$10,000. We are a third of the way there! Please consider donating \$10 and inviting 10 of your friends to each donate \$10.

To donate, go to <http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/donate.html>.

Tell 10 friends about the "10 by 10" Campaign by forwarding this email.

Let's work together to stop these inhumane, unjust and ineffective policies! Thank you for your time and consideration!

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~ Newsletter edited by Julie Kudrna ~

[Tell a Friend!](#)

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