



September 14, 2011

To: Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski, Ranking Member Kay Bailey Hutchison and the Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Re: FY 2012 funding levels for juvenile justice programming

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, and youth, families and communities nationwide, we urge you to restore critical funding to juvenile justice programs as you mark up the FY 2012 spending bill for Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS). Reductions to juvenile justice funding in the FY 2011 cycle and proposed by the House Committee on Appropriations for FY 2012 seriously undermine federal juvenile justice law; have dangerous consequences for our nation's most vulnerable youth; and result in decreased public safety for our communities and, ultimately, in imprudent long-term fiscal outcomes.

To uphold standards set forth in federal law, and to preserve progress that we as a nation have made to prevent delinquency and improve juvenile justice, the undersigned organizations request that funding for juvenile justice programs be restored to their modest FY 2010 levels:

- **\$75 million for the Title II State Formula Grants Program of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A);**
- **\$65 million for the JJDP A Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Program, *with no earmarks*;**
- **\$55 million for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (JABG), and**
- **\$100 million for mentoring programs.**

This past July, the House Appropriations Committee approved funding levels totaling only \$123 million for juvenile justice programs in FY 2012 – a 55% reduction from FY 2011 and a *more than 70% cut from FY 2010*. Specifically, the House Appropriations Committee has eliminated two major programs, the JJDP A Title V and JABG programs, and decreased funding for the JJDP A Title II program by more than 35%. These reductions not only jeopardize juvenile justice improvements essential to protecting our nation's communities and most at-risk youth, but also represent unwise fiscal policy. Research indicates that youth are best served through interventions that, whenever possible, keep them at home and provide targeted and evidence-based supports. The proposed cuts to juvenile justice programs will increase our reliance on incarceration—the most costly and least rehabilitative option of all. If not restored, these cuts will:

- **Decrease investments in youth development and delinquency prevention programs** that have been demonstrated to divert youth away from the juvenile justice system and dramatically reduce delinquent behavior and cut juvenile recidivism, thereby making our communities safer;
- **Undercut protections to ensure that youth in custody** get the safe, humane and rehabilitative care appropriate to their age, their needs and their offenses;
- **Restrict efforts to identify and expand the use of evidence-based approaches** by juvenile justice systems nationwide to ensure that youth build resilience and pro-social skills; and
- **Force state and local juvenile justice systems to rely more on incarceration** and other costly, less effective approaches when it is estimated that prevention and intervention efforts save \$10 to \$13 for every one dollar invested.

Criminologists estimate that steering just one high-risk delinquent youth away from a life of crime saves society \$3 million to \$6 million in reduced victim costs and criminal justice expenses, plus increased wages and tax payments over the course of a young person's life. It is economically sound policy to invest in programs and systems that help at risk youth thrive, keep the public safe, and save taxpayers money. The undersigned organizations urge the Appropriations Committee to restore funding to these three juvenile justice programs at least to their FY 2010 levels.

Should you have any questions, or if we can provide additional information, please contact the undersigned. Thank you for your serious consideration of our concerns and request.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Black Administrators in Child Welfare
Boys Town
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for Children's Law & Policy
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Covenant House
First Focus
Girls Inc.
Global Youth Justice
International CURE
Justice Policy Institute
Juvenile Law Center
The Lionheart Foundation
Mental Health America
NAACP Washington Bureau
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)
National Council of La Raza
National Disability Rights Network
National Juvenile Justice Network
Racial Justice Initiative of TimeBanks USA
Real Cost of Prisons Project
Robert F. Kennedy Juvenile Justice Collaborative
The Sentencing Project
Street Soccer, USA
Up2Us
The W. Haywood Burns Institute
YMCA of the USA

State and Local Organizations

20th Judicial Circuit Court (MI)
Action for Children North Carolina
Alameda County Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission (CA)
CARES for Youth (CA)
Center for Community Dispute Settlement, Inc. (CA)
Center for Conflict Resolution (IL)
Chain-Breakers
Child and Family Services (NH)
Children's Law Center (KY)
Collaborative Efforts Organization (NY)
The College Initiative (NY)
Colorado Juvenile Defender Coalition
Columbia Heights Youth Club (DC)
Community Mediation Services, Inc. (NY)
Community SOLUTIONS of El Paso (TX)
Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance
Contra Costa County Youth Court (CA)
Council on Crime and Justice (MN)
DC Lawyers for Youth
Douglas County Youth Initiative (CO)
Eden Township Youth Court (CA)
Families & Allies of Virginia's Youth (FAVY)
Families and Friends of Louisiana Incarcerated Children
Family Centers, Inc. (CT)
FosterParentTraining.com (NV)
The Foundation for Restorative Justice (PA)
Friends of Island Academy (NY)
Georgetown University Law Center (DC)
Gray Panthers of the East Bay (CA)
Head to the Sky, Inc. (FL)
Huckleberry Youth Programs (CA)
Illinois Models for Change Initiative
Indiana Juvenile Justice Task Force, Inc.
Iowa Coalition 4 Juvenile Justice
Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois
Justice for Families (NY)
Juvenile Justice Initiative (IL)
Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota
Marion County Commission On Youth, Inc. (IN)
Mentoring Male Teens in the Hood (MD)
Missouri Juvenile Justice Association
New Mexico Council on Crime and Delinquency
PALS on the Street (CA)
Passage Productions (TX)
Pennsylvania Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (PA)
Pretrial Justice Institute (DC)

RECOURSE Mediation Services (CA)
Renewed Minds CDC, Inc. (NJ)
Resolution Works (CO)
Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc. (DC)
Sedgwick County Department of Corrections (KS)
SEEDS Community Resolution Center (CA)
Tennessee Community Services
Tri-Cities Youth Court (CA)
Tri Valley Youth Court (CA)
UCLA Juvenile Justice and Reentry Project (CA)
Virginia CURE
Voices for Children in Nebraska
Voices UnBroken (NY)
Washington Defender Association (WA)
Wilco (Williamson County) Justice Alliance (TX)
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Interfaith Needs Response
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (IL)
Youth Court of the District of Columbia