

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Vice President Joe Biden
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Dear President Obama and Vice President Biden,

We are writing today to respectfully request that you select a strong nominee for the position of Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) as soon as possible. As we are over halfway through the current Presidential term, we are distressed by the lack of a nominee and would like to schedule a meeting with you or a surrogate to discuss the issue.

As you know, Administrator of OJJDP is one of only two positions within the Department of Justice (DOJ) for which a nominee has not been selected. While we are pleased with actions OJJDP has taken toward reforming and right-sizing the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice systems so far, our nation's vulnerable youth need and deserve an experienced and competent OJJDP Administrator at the helm.


Created over 35 years ago as part of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA), OJJDP is the federal agency charged with strengthening the juvenile justice system's efforts to protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and provide services that address the needs of youth and their families. Despite its vital responsibility to provide leadership to States through its research agenda, dissemination of best practices, technical assistance and support to State and territories to comply with the JJDPA, and development of national policies and priorities, the Office has suffered a drastic depletion of funding and support over the last decade. Specifically, federal funding for OJJDP and its programs has declined 90% since 2002 and the JJDPA is four years overdue for reauthorization.

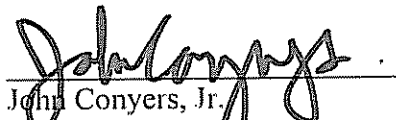
Yet by selecting an effective and committed nominee for OJJDP Administrator right away, we believe you have the opportunity to prioritize a national juvenile justice agenda that not only keeps youth safe but builds on cost-effective programs that have been shown to reduce juvenile delinquency. We know what works to improve outcomes: evidenced-based strategies that prevent juvenile delinquency and that provide for right-sizing the numbers and types of juveniles placed in the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice systems so that all youth get an appropriate, cost-effective, and meaningful response to their involvement with these systems. Accordingly, we need your leadership and an effective OJJDP Administrator in order to reverse course and invest in proven strategies.


Importantly, this is not only a moral issue but an economic one. Incarcerating youth is enormously expensive, while an even greater cost to society comes from lost opportunities. As you know, every year nearly two million of our nation's youth are involved in the juvenile and adult justice systems, many of whom could have been prevented from getting involved in the first place. According to the Urban Institute, one youth engaging in repeat offenses can cost taxpayers over \$5.7 million over the course of a lifetime in lost productivity, incarceration costs, and reliance on social programs. However, by investing in what works, we can help change the fate of delinquent and at-risk youth around the country. Doing so would also provide long-term relief for state budgets by reducing recidivism and supporting local workforces.

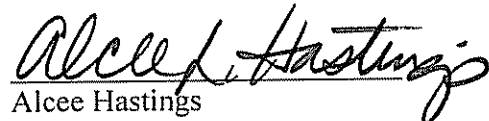
As a nation, we cannot afford to wait any longer for the nomination of an OJJDP Administrator and a prioritization of issues facing at-risk youth. Please have your staff contact Linda Forman in the office of Congressman Chris Murphy at (202) 225-4476 should you have any questions or to schedule a meeting with us for you or a surrogate.

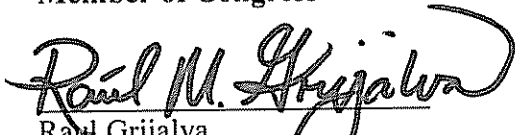
Sincerely,


Christopher S. Murphy
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress



Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress

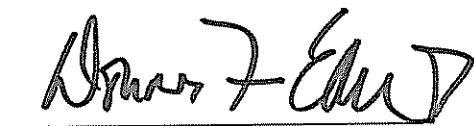

Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress


Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress

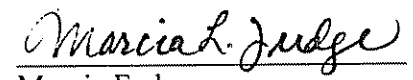

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress

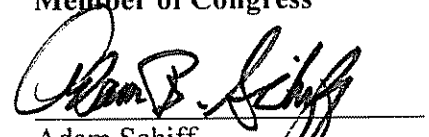

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

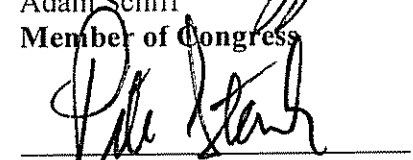

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

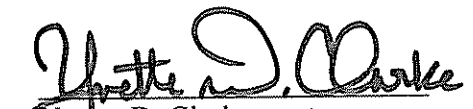

Todd Russell Platts
Member of Congress

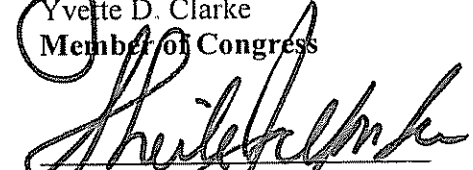

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Marcia Fudge
Member of Congress



Adam Schiff
Member of Congress


Fortney "Pete" Stark
Member of Congress


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress


Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress


James P. Moran
Member of Congress