

FAQ: Resolutions & Proclamations Declaring October to be Youth Justice Awareness Month

What is a Resolution, what is a Proclamation, and what's the difference?

A Resolution is a declaration passed by a legislative body, like a City Council or a state legislature; a Proclamation is a similar declaration issued by an executive branch official, like a Governor or a mayor. Though not binding law, resolutions and proclamations are **important statements about shared beliefs and values**. Resolutions can also be endorsed by non-governmental bodies like school governments, or faith-based social justice committees, or even businesses or labor unions.

Why is it important?

Getting groups and governments to endorse October as Youth Justice Awareness Month may seem symbolic – and it is – but it's also a great way to spread awareness and **educate decision-makers** about the harsh consequences of trying, sentencing and incarcerating kids in the adult criminal justice system. It's also a great way for advocates to gain **valuable experience**, develop **important relationships**, and strengthen their campaigns and coalitions. And as resolutions pile up across the country, it's also a way for us to turn our separate campaigns into a **national movement**. In addition, an endorsement of Youth Justice Awareness Month at the local level is a show of support for reform that protects kids, and can positively **influence the views and votes of state or federal legislators** who represent your community.

Where do I start?

We want all 50 states, and the White House, to officially declare October Youth Justice Awareness Month. If your Governor is not amenable to this (yet), get more **receptive local city and county governments** to pass resolutions. If a city or county government doesn't seem ready to endorse a resolution, get resolutions from **local faith communities, universities, businesses, labor unions, and other associations**. Take this demonstration of support to your reluctant local government officials, and they may change their tune. And once you have enough local governments on board, you can go back to your Governor. This is a tangible example of how movements are built from the ground up. The relationships you develop and the awareness you raise during this process will make your campaigns to change laws stronger, and your successes more sustainable.

How do I do it?

See our Guide to [Passing a YJAM Resolution](#) for all the information you'll need.

What do I do with the Resolutions and Proclamations that I get?

Community resolutions passed by local businesses, faith communities, schools, etc., should be delivered to your elected officials, to demonstrate the support you have. Government endorsed resolutions should appear on official government websites. Your group or coalition should also keep copies of every resolution or proclamation you get. Also, please **send us a copy of each and every one of the resolutions and proclamation you get**, so we can track this national effort, post them on our website, and document this growing movement.

What after that?

Once your city, county or state has officially made October Youth Justice Awareness Month, you can begin planning bigger and better events, possibly with government participation or resources, to continue to build on your success. Also, **keep in touch** with all the elected officials, partner organizations, and individuals you met during this process to enlist them in your efforts to change the law and get kids out of the adult criminal justice system.