



Juvenile Justice Coalition

August 16, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (S. 860/H.R. 1809)

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

I am writing today on behalf of the Juvenile Justice Coalition (JJC), a non-profit organization based in Ohio that works with youth who are involved in the juvenile courts or have been suspended or expelled from school.

The reauthorization of the JJDPa is critical to Ohio and the youth in our court systems. The JJDPa sets best practice standards for the states that consistently raise the bar on how youth in the juvenile courts should be approached. Over the past decade, research on what works for youth in the courts has made significant gains, showing very clearly what works to help improve outcomes for youth, their families, and communities as a whole, including increasing public safety. The JJDPa fundamentally helps to reinforce this research-based approach that ultimately saves taxpayer dollars and can put youth on the right track.

Unfortunately, in Ohio, JJDPa funding has decreased exponentially, leaving gaps in outcome-based investments that can ultimately reduce youths' future involvement in the court and social services systems. For example, in Ohio, incarcerating one youth costs over \$185,000 per year – the equivalent of eight years of undergraduate education at The Ohio State University – and youth in our state youth prisons have a nearly 50% recidivism rate, meaning they are back in a youth or adult prison within three years after their release.

I urge you to move forward with JJDPa reauthorization as expeditiously as possible. Ohio's children and communities cannot wait for improved federal standards and the opportunity for additional dollars invested in effective, life-saving programming. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at edavies@jjohio.org.

Sincerely,

Erin Davies, Executive Director
Juvenile Justice Coalition
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Worthington, OH 43085
614-400-5548

CC: Senator Chuck Grassley, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Representative Jason Lewis, and Representative Bobby Scott