



Legislative Alert JJJPA Reauthorization November 2007

Please join CfJJ in supporting the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJJPA)!

What is the JJJPA?

Established in 1974 and most recently reauthorized in 2002, the JJJPA is a federal act that is based on a broad, bipartisan consensus that youth and families involved with the juvenile and criminal courts should be guarded by federal standards for care and custody, while also upholding the interests of community safety.

Why is the JJJPA important?

The JJJPA sets out federal standards for the custody and care of youth in the juvenile justice system. These standards include four core protections that help ensure the health and well-being of youth:

- **Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)** keeps status offenders (e.g. runaways, truant) out of secure facilities;
- **Adult Jail and Lockup Removal (Jail Removal)** prevents youth from being confined with adults in adult facilities;
- **Sight and Sound Separation** provides that when youth are held with adults (as occurs in limited instances) they be separated by both sight and sound from adult offenders;
- **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)** mandates that states address the disproportionate contact of youth of color at key contact points in the juvenile justice system – from arrest to detention to confinement.

In Massachusetts, the framework and funding provided by JJJPA have been critical to the Commonwealth's efforts to begin to address racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Why is reauthorization urgent?

For the first time in over twenty years, we have a Congress that is ready and willing to strengthen, rather than weaken, the four core protections mentioned above. Currently, juvenile arrest rates are at a historic low, and the continuing success of effective juvenile crime prevention and deterrence depends on Congress strengthening these protections and providing the funding needed to fulfill such provisions to the greatest extent possible.

What can you do to take action?

CfJJ is one of more than 225 national, state, and local organizations that are supporting the reauthorization of the JJJPA. **Please add your voice to ours by calling, e-mailing or writing your legislator ASAP.** Please see reverse side for contact information for the members of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation and for talking points to use in educating your legislator about the importance of reauthorizing this vital piece of legislation this year.

For more details, please see the website of Act 4 Juvenile Justice (www.act4jj.org), a nationwide initiative addressing the reauthorization of the JJJPA.

Points to Make In Support of JJDP A Reauthorization:

- This year the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act is scheduled for reauthorization and I want to encourage you to support this reauthorization.
- The JJDP A has, for more than 30 years, provided direction and support for juvenile justice system improvement and significantly contributed to the reduction of juvenile crime and delinquency.
- The JJDP A reauthorization should follow these four key principles:
 - **Address the needs of children and their families early to keep children and youth out of the justice system**
 - **Ensure equity and competence with respect to race, ethnicity, culture, language, sex and sexual orientation throughout juvenile justice system practices and policies**
 - **Ensure responses appropriate to a young person's age and stage of development**
 - **Strengthen the federal partnership with state and local governments by providing sufficient resources**
- It is urgent that the JJDP A be reauthorized this year so that young people can continue to be protected by the JJDP A. The continuing success of effective juvenile crime prevention and deterrence depends on Congress strengthening both the provisions of the JJDP A, as well as the funding resources

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