



## AMERICAN HUMANE

*Protecting Children & Animals Since 1877*

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senate  
433 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

July 2, 2008

Dear Senator Leahy:

On behalf of the American Humane Association, we are writing to express our strong support for S. 3155, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2008 as introduced. While we are supportive of the bill, we are hopeful the bill can be further amended to provide for stronger conditions of confinement language, improved incentive grants language, and a phase-out of the statutory authority to confine youth status offenders in juveniles facilities.

S. 3155 meaningfully updates and improves many of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) core requirements, research and training resources and other key areas of the law. We are pleased to see such positive movement to reauthorize the JJDP A, which, for more than 30 years, has provided states and localities with federal standards and supports for improving juvenile justice and delinquency prevention practices and put in place safeguards for youth, families and communities.

American Humane recently launched an initiative on restorative justice practices. American Humane promotes restorative justice to help young offenders repair the harm they caused and accept accountability for their actions, and to decrease the likelihood that they will progress to the adult criminal justice system. This is achieved through a community-based approach to dealing with crime, the effects of crime and the prevention of crime, called Restorative Conferencing for Youth Justice. This initiative focuses on research and training for juvenile justice, child welfare, courts and other related systems. In this alternative way to look at the criminal justice system, young offenders are required to accept responsibility for their crimes and must take an active role in repairing the damage their crime has created, victims are empowered to ensure that their own needs are met and to resolve their feelings toward the crime, and communities can enjoy a lower crime rate and safer neighborhoods.

We specifically applaud the progress represented by the following amendments in S. 3155:

### **Core Requirements:**

- Strengthens the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) core requirement
- Improves the Jail Removal and Sight and Sound core requirements
- Allows States to continue to place youth convicted in adult court in juvenile facilities

**Overall juvenile justice system improvements:**

- Improves conditions of confinement in juvenile facilities
- Provides comprehensive services and supports for youth

**Support for states:**

- Increases states' ability to comply with the core requirements
- Creates incentive grants
- Expands the role of OJJDP

**Funding levels:**

- Sets more appropriate authorization levels for Title II and Title V

In light of these advancements, we support S. 3155 as a significant step towards improving the JJDPA and offer ourselves as a resource as the bill moves through the legislative process. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of youth, families and communities across the country.

Sincerely,

Allie Phillips, J.D.  
Director of Public Policy  
[AllieP@AmericanHumane.org](mailto:AllieP@AmericanHumane.org)

Patty Chavez  
Legislative Analyst  
[PattyC@AmericanHumane.org](mailto:PattyC@AmericanHumane.org)