



November 6, 2015

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair
Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Culberson
Chair
Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the Act-4-JJ Campaign and our broad network of more than 300 organizations representing all states, territories and the District of Columbia, we are writing to ask you to include adequate funding for critical juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs in the final Fiscal Year 2016 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations bill.

We very much appreciate your efforts to move forward the FY 2016 appropriations process with the passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. As leaders on the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill we encourage you to work to secure the highest 302(b) allocation possible and within that amount ask that you consider the following allocations for juvenile justice:

- **\$80 million for the JJDP A Title II State Formula Grants Program.** For more than 40 years, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) has provided critical federal funding to states to promote delinquency prevention and to comply with federally-mandated core requirements designed to protect children from the dangers of placement in adult jails and lockups; keep status offenders out of locked custody; and address the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the justice system. Title II of the JJDP A supports state compliance with these core protections and helps states to build effective prevention and intervention systems. While our request represents an increase over the FY15 level and the amount approved by the Senate appropriations subcommittee last June, such a level would be in line with the true minimum costs of Title II requirements and would make up for deep cuts in funding to the states over the past decade. Legislation to reauthorize this landmark law is also moving through Congress and it is critical that appropriation recommendations reflect the needs outlined by authorizers.
- **\$65 million for the JJDP A Title V Delinquency Prevention Program with no earmarks.** Title V is the only federal program that provides delinquency prevention funding at the local level to reach

youth at risk and help keep them out of the juvenile justice system. Despite the fact that Title V has been used to bring together law enforcement with other stakeholders at the local level for sustainable prevention efforts, in recent years it has been gutted and the funds allocated for other than statutory purposes. This request is also an increase over prior years and, without any earmarks or set-asides, would represent a significant federal investment in proven, locally-based delinquency prevention programs. Taxpayers save \$2 million for each child who is prevented from beginning a life of crime.

- **\$30 million for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) Program.**

JABG is used by states and localities to reduce juvenile offending by providing judges and other juvenile justice officials with a range of age/developmentally-appropriate options to both hold youth accountable and get them back on track so they are less likely to reoffend. These funds are used to effectively strengthen juvenile court services, such as behavioral health screening and assessment for court-involved youth and alternatives to detention. We were dismayed to learn that Congress had zeroed out funding for this program in its omnibus appropriations bill for FY15 and encourage you to restore these dollars. Again, legislation to reauthorize this important program has been put forward and we urge you to allocate funds in accordance with those proposals.

- **\$30 million for the NEW Smart on Juvenile Justice Initiative.**

Recommended in the Administration's FY 2016 budget, these new federal dollars will promote evidence-based juvenile justice system reforms, provide training and technical assistance to juvenile justice prosecutors, and address racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

- **\$25 million in community-based violence prevention initiatives**

Given the daily violence that plagues many communities, we are also supportive of the federal investment in community-based violence prevention using a multi-sector, public health approach.

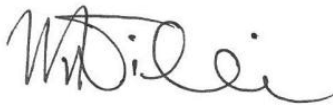
- **\$10 million grant program for girls in the juvenile justice system**

We also support this targeted investment in a competitive grant program to help states and localities better address the needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. Girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population and this program will help provide specific, targeted support for state efforts to implement best practices with respect to at-risk and system-involved girls.

While we encourage you to invest in these key programs at these recommended levels, we also ask that, at a minimum, you include levels recommended in the bill approved by the Senate appropriations subcommittee in June. Any less would move even further away from the targeted federal involvement that has historically provided critical national leadership to states in preventing youth from entering the justice system.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Marie Williams
Executive Director, Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Co-Chair, ACT4JJ Campaign



Marcy Mistrett
CEO, Campaign for Youth Justice
Co-Chair, ACT4JJ Campaign