March 10, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable José Serrano
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Moran and Serrano and Ranking Members Shaheen and Aderholt:

On behalf of the Act 4 JJ Coalition, a broad network of organizations representing states, territories, and the District of Columbia, we are writing to express how important it is to fully fund critical juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs for Fiscal Year 2021. Federal investments play an essential role in state juvenile justice efforts to protect youth, prevent delinquency, and promote safe communities. This was affirmed by Congress when it reauthorized the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) at the end of the 115th Congress. The reauthorization brings this critical federal law up to date with evidence-based practices, research, and progress made in states across the country.

Under the newly reauthorized law, states are being asked to do more to receive their federal formula grants under Title II of the Act; and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is also required to provide additional technical assistance to states and key stakeholders, as well as produce more research. Despite these requirements, overall federal support of key juvenile justice programs has declined by a little over forty percent since the last reauthorization in 2002, and we are concerned about the impact that any further reductions in funding would have on states’ ability to serve youth. While we were grateful to see an increase in funding for juvenile justice programs in FY 2020, the levels were still below authorizing levels. We strongly encourage you to

consider raising the funding levels in line with the reauthorization bill, including the following amounts:

**Require full implementation of the JJDPA by appropriating $176 million dollars for Titles II & V of the Act in FY2021 budget, including:**

- **$80,000,000** to carry out programs under the Charles Grassley Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program, Title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as authorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018;
  - of which not more than 5% goes to provide training and technical assistance to states; and
  - of which not more than 10% goes to support research conducted by OJJDP.

Title II of JJDPA provides federal funding to states to promote delinquency prevention and assist them to comply with federally-mandated core requirements designed to protect children from the dangers of placement in adult jails and lockups; keep status offenders/non-delinquent children out of locked custody; and address the racial and ethnic disparities faced by youth of color in the justice system.

- **$96,053,401** to carry out programs under in the Incentive Youth Promise Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2018, Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as authorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018;
  - of which, 11% goes to support the Tribal Youth Program; and
  - the remaining $86.4 million goes to support the Title V PROMISE grants.

Title V is the only federal program that provides delinquency prevention funding at the local level to reach at-risk youth and help keep them out of the juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 renames this title “Incentive Grants for Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (PROMISE)” and expands the uses of this grant program to include 29 funding areas, and establishes local youth councils to develop prevention programming that ensures needs of at-risk youth are being met.

Tribal Youth are over-represented in state and local delinquency systems. The Juvenile Justice Reform Act provides an increased percentage in Title V funding for Tribal Youth Programs to ensure Tribes are able to invest in traditionally-grounded, trauma-based delinquency prevention programs.

In addition, we urge you to include funding for additional juvenile justice programs, including:

- **$30,000,000** for the Tiffany Josynl Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Act of 2019 (H.R. 494), as passed by unanimous consent the U.S. House of Representatives in the 115th and 116th Congress.4

Historically, funding through the JABG program has supported state efforts to effectively strengthen supports for court-involved youth. These funds support vital state efforts to

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effectively strengthen juvenile court services, such as behavioral health screening and assessment for court-involved youth and alternatives to detention.

The JJDPA has been an extremely successful program, yet cuts to these programs have weakened the federal-state partnership and stymied national, state, and local progress in this area. Many states have already had to significantly reduce services. Further cuts would inhibit the improvements made by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 and result in fewer youth having access to services designed to keep them from engaging in unlawful behaviors and penetrating deeper into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

It is critical that Congress fully fund these programs as authorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act in order for implementation of the new requirements of the law to be successful. Congress must affirm this important federal-state partnership to protect children and to invest in innovative and cost-effective reforms that keep youth out of trouble and communities safe. The Act 4 JJ Coalition urges you to consider these critical supports for youth and communities in this year’s CJS Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

National Groups:
ACLU
African American Juvenile Justice Project
Afterschool Alliance
Boys Town
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for Children's Law and Policy
Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Ceres Policy Research
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Communities In Schools National Office
CURE (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants)
First Focus on Children
Forum for Youth Investment
Futures Without Violence
Girls Inc.
Healthy Teen Network
Human Rights for Kids
Justice For Families
Justice Policy Institute
Juvenile Law Center
Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Legal Aid Justice Center
Legal Rights Center
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
MomsRising
NAACP
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council of Churches
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Criminal Justice Association
National Crittenton
National Disability Rights Network
National Juvenile Defender Center
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS)
R Street Institute
Results For America
Rights4Girls
Rutgers University Center on Youth Justice and Human Development
School Social Work Association of America
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund
SparkAction
Strategies for Youth
The Forum for Youth Investment
The Sentencing Project
Treatment Communities of America
True Colors United
Union for Reform Judaism
W. Haywood Burns Institute
Year Up
YMCA of the USA
Youth Advocate Programs (YAP)
Youth First Initiative
Youth Villages

STATES:
Alabama
Girls Inc. of Dothan

Alaska
Alaska Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

Arizona
Children's Action Alliance

Arkansas
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

California
Anti-Recidivism Coalition (ARC)
Girls Inc. of Alameda County
Girls Inc. of Greater Santa Barbara
Girls Inc. of the Island City
Girls Inc. of San Diego County
Colorado
Colorado Juvenile Defender Center

Connecticut
Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

Delaware
Delaware Center for Justice
Girls Inc. of Delaware
Delaware Office of Defense Services

District of Columbia
Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop
Georgetown Juvenile Justice Initiative
Open City Advocates
School Justice Project

Florida
Girls Inc. of Jacksonville
Girls Inc. of Pinellas
No left Turns Inc.
Southern Poverty Law Center of Florida

Georgia
Voices for Georgia's Children

Illinois
Girls Inc. of Chicago
Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative

Indiana
Children’s Law & Policy of Indiana
CROWN Community Development Corporation (Crown Mentoring Program)
Girls Inc. of Wayne County
Indianapolis Urban League
Marion County Commission on Youth

Iowa
Girls Inc. of Sioux City

Kansas
Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice

Kentucky
Kentucky Juvenile Justice Initiative
Kentucky Youth Advocates

Louisiana
Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC)
Louisiana Center for Children's Rights
Maine
Spurwink
Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Maine Inside out
Community Concepts, Inc.

Maryland
Advocates for Children and Youth
BMore Awesome
The Choice Program, UMBC
Shades of Art

Massachusetts
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell

Michigan
Michigan Center for Youth Justice

Minnesota
Girls Inc. YWCA Minneapolis

Mississippi
Mississippi juvenile justice state advisory group

Missouri
All of Us or None of Us-St. Louis Chapter
Empower Missouri
Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis, MO
Metropolitan Congregations United
Missouri CURE
Missouri State Public Defender
Mothers of Incarcerated Sons & Daughters (MISD) of Kansas City, MO

Nebraska
Girls Inc. of Omaha
Sarpy County Public Defender Office
Voices for Children in Nebraska

Nevada
ACLU-Nevada

New Hampshire
Girls Inc. of New Hampshire

New Jersey
New Jersey Parents Caucus

New Mexico
NMCAN
New York
Cases
Children's Defense Fund-NY
Girls Inc. at YWCA of Syracuse and Onondaga County Inc.
Girls Inc. NYC
Girls Inc. of Long Island
Gladys Allen Brigham Com Ctr/Girls Inc. of the Berkshires
Youth Represent

Ohio
Directions for Youth & Families
Franklin County Public Defender Office
Juvenile Justice Coalition

Oklahoma
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon
Girls Inc. of the Pacific Northwest

Pennsylvania
Girls Inc. of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey
Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP)

Rhode Island
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

South Carolina
Every Black Girl
Lawyer’s Committee for Children’s Rights
My Brothers Keeper

Tennessee
Girls Inc. of Kingsport
Girls Inc. of Memphis
Girls Inc. Of Shelbyville & Shelby County
Girls Inc. of TN Valley

Texas
Girls Inc. of Greater Houston
Girls Inc. of Metropolitan Dallas
Girls Inc. of San Antonio
Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

Utah
Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys

Vermont
Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform

Virginia
Institute of Forgiveness
Washington
Girls Inc. of Washington County
Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Washington Defense Association

West Virginia
ACLU of West Virginia

Wyoming
Wyoming Children’s Law Center, Inc

CC: House and Senate Appropriations Committee Members