

December 20, 2002

Mr. Mitchell Daniels, Jr., Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
17th St. & Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Daniels:

As the Administration continues its work on the budget for Fiscal Year 2004, the undersigned members of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Coalition urge you to increase investment in community-based juvenile crime prevention efforts that positively engage children and youth, and state juvenile justice efforts to reduce crime and delinquency.

To keep all children and youth safe and out of trouble, additional funds must be provided to continue to support youth development and prevention efforts. A growing volume of research has shown that early investment in youth development and prevention programs can dramatically reduce youth crime and violence. Providing *all* children and youth, including children and youth with disabilities, with constructive alternatives in and out of school is essential to ensuring that our Nation's children and youth in high-risk situations have every opportunity to grow into responsible, productive, healthy, and law-abiding adults. To this end, we ask that the Administration make a strong commitment to keep children and youth safe from harm and to help children and youth realize their full potential by increasing investment in 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs, the new Part C Delinquency Prevention Block Grant, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs.

Additionally, the newly reauthorized juvenile justice legislation (P.L. 107-273) gives states and units of local government more flexibility to address juvenile crime and delinquency with a greater emphasis on prevention, alternatives to incarceration, treatment, and services. Additional funds must be provided to successfully integrate these options into the juvenile justice system. In order to strengthen the juvenile justice system to meet the prevention and rehabilitative needs of adjudicated youths and those at risk of being adjudicated, we urge you to increase funding for the Part B State Formula Grants, and Parts D and E, and to fully fund the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG).

Funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program has grown over the last several years, providing an increasing number of children and youth, who would otherwise be left home alone after school, with supervised, productive after-school activities. However, this program is modestly funded given the number of children and youth who do not have access to constructive after-school activities. Substantial new

investments are still needed given the role that after-school programs can play both in keeping children and youth safe from harm while helping them succeed academically.

We strongly urge the Administration to increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program to a total of \$1.5 billion to help schools and community-based organizations start, operate, and expand programs for children and youth.

The Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs is an effective model of community collaboration in which community stakeholders – including locally elected officials, law enforcement, public recreation, private nonprofit organizations, and youth workers – come together to develop a plan for juvenile delinquency prevention. Title V provides states with matching funds for community based prevention programs that include primary prevention aimed at high-risk youth with no prior contact with law enforcement. Despite its success in nearly 1,000 communities nationwide, Title V funding was cut in FY2002, and we are deeply concerned that more than two-thirds of the total appropriation for Title V was earmarked for other programs. **We ask that the Administration expand Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs from \$94.3 million to at least \$250 million in FY2004.**

The Part C Delinquency Prevention Block Grant is included in the newly reauthorized Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, and funds activities designed to prevent and reduce juvenile crime in communities which have a comprehensive juvenile crime prevention plan. Eligible recipients include community-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, local education authorities, local governments, social service providers and other entities with a demonstrated history of involvement in juvenile delinquency prevention. **We ask that the Administration fund the Delinquency Prevention Block Grant at \$100 million in FY2004.**

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) provides critical assistance to youth in high-risk situations throughout the nation through three programs. The Basic Center program provides grants to community-based, faith-based, and local public organizations to support emergency (no greater than 15 days) shelter for youth under age 18, and counseling for youth and their families in order to assist them in reuniting with their families or connecting to alternative guardians. The Transitional Living Program provides grants to support longer-term (up to 18 months) residential supports as well as independent living opportunities to youth ages 16-21 who are unable to return home safely, in order to promote their successful transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency. The Street Outreach Program (formally called the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program) provides grants to support street-based outreach and education to runaway, homeless, and street youth who have been sexually abused or are at risk of sexual abuse, in order to connect these most vulnerable youth with services and a chance for a safe and healthy future. RHYA funds also support a national runaway hot-line and regional training, and technical assistance for youth workers and their agencies. The RHYA programs ensure safety and support in community-based settings to thousands of youth who would otherwise risk coming in contact with the juvenile justice and child welfare protection systems. **We urge you to provide full funding for these programs,**

including \$130 million for the runaway and homeless youth consolidated account (which includes Basic Centers, the Transitional Living Program, the National Runaway Switchboard, and important training, technical assistance, and informational resources), and \$20 million for the Street Outreach Program.

The Part B State Formula Grants provide essential support to states to operate their juvenile justice systems and to meet vital protection requirements contained in the law. The Formula Grants fund several new focus areas, including programs to provide mental health services to juveniles, to provide follow-up post placement services to juveniles, to provide counseling, mentoring and training opportunities for juveniles, and to expand the use of probation officers to allow nonviolent offenders to remain in community. Federal resources have historically provided invaluable assistance in creating start-up opportunities in existing purpose areas and are critically necessary to assist states in implementing these new focus areas. **We strongly urge the Administration to increase funding for the state formula grants.**

The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant provides states and units of local government with funds to develop programs to promote greater accountability in the juvenile justice system. The new legislation expands its reach to provide additional services and treatment for troubled youth. By supporting these additional purposes, JABG will provide needed resources to proven strategies for rehabilitating adjudicated youth, as well as reducing juvenile recidivism rates. **We ask that the Administration fully fund the JABG at \$350 million.**

Parts D and E provide discretionary funding for research, demonstrations, evaluations, and replications of promising new initiatives. Development of demonstration projects in new, innovative techniques and methods is vital. Providing for the evaluation of delinquency prevention programs to determine their efficacy is essential if we are to sustain the reductions in crime and delinquency. Over the past several years an increasing number of earmarks have prohibited these programs from carrying out their primary purpose. **We recommend that the Administration increase resources for Parts D and E and that no more than 25% of these discretionary funds be earmarked for other purposes.**

Thank you for your consideration in support of significant investments to assist in the productive, healthy development of all our Nation's children and youth.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Civil Liberties Union, National Prison Project
American Correctional Association
American Probation and Parole Association
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Children & Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
Children's Defense Fund
Child Welfare League of America
Covenant House
Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Washington Office
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Network for Youth
Physicians for Human Rights
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
School Social Work Association of America
Women of Reform Judaism
Youth Law Center