

May 9, 2003

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 522
Washington, DC 20510
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary
393 Russell Senate Office Bldg.

Dear Senators Stevens and Gregg:

As the Appropriations Committee considers its FY 2004 Commerce, Justice, and State appropriations bill, the undersigned members of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition urge you to restore critical funding to support 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 Committee 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 the Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs and the new Part C Delinquency Prevention Block Grant.

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).

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 Committee fully fund the JABG at \$350 million.

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 FY2003 by over 50% to \$46 million, and we are deeply concerned that all but \$3 million was earmarked for other programs. We ask that the Committee expand Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs to at least \$100 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 Committee fund the Delinquency Prevention Block Grant at \$127 million in FY2004.

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 the 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 Committee to increase funding for the state formula grants.

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 Committee increase resources for Parts D and E and to reduce the amount of funding for earmarks.

Over the past several years an increasing number of earmarks have prohibited many of these programs from carrying out their primary purpose. We recommend that no more than 25% of these discretionary funds are 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 Correctional Association
American Counseling Association
American Probation and Parole Association
The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Children's Defense Fund
Church Women United
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Coalition to Stop Gun Violence
Covenant House
Justice Policy Institute
National Association of Counties
National Association of School Psychologists
National Recreation and Park Association
Physicians for Human Rights
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office
School Social Work Association of America
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
Volunteers of America
Women of Reform Judaism
Youth Law Center