

May 20th, 2004

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

The Honorable Judd Gregg  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Stevens and Gregg:

As the Senate Appropriations Committee considers its FY 2005 Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations bill, the undersigned members of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition and other child advocacy and juvenile justice organizations around the country urge you to restore critical funding to support state juvenile justice prevention, intervention, and youth accountability programs and increase funding for services for at-risk youth. As described below, the three critical funding streams for which we request restored funding in FY 2005 are:

The Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Program (Title V);  
The Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program (DPBG); and  
The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (JABG).

### **Focusing on Prevention and Intervention: Title V and DPBG**

To keep all children and youth safe and out of trouble, sufficient funds must be provided to continue to support youth development, prevention and intervention efforts. A growing volume of research clearly establishes that early investment in youth development and prevention programs can dramatically reduce youth crime and violence. Estimates for cost savings range from \$4-\$7 for every one dollar invested in prevention and intervention efforts. Providing *all* children and youth, including children and youth with disabilities, with constructive programs and alternatives is essential to ensuring that our nation's at-risk children and youth 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 Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Program and the Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program.

#### *Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention*

The Title V Program 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 1,200 communities nationwide, proposed funding for Title V in FY 2005 is only \$44.4 million, a cut of more than 40% from FY 2004 levels, and we are deeply concerned that all but \$7 million is earmarked for other programs. Title V was funded for four consecutive years prior to FY 2003 at \$95 million.

We ask that the Committee restore Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs to its historical level of **\$95 million** in FY 2005.

#### *The Delinquency Prevention Block Grant Program*

The DPBG is included in the 2002 re-authorized Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), 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. The DPBG was created with the consolidation of five separate program authorities that focused on mentoring, state challenge activities, gang-free schools and communities, and other related activities, the total of which was \$126.4 million in FY 2003. While the DPBG was authorized beginning in FY 2003, funds have yet to be appropriated.

We ask that the Committee fund the Delinquency Prevention Block Grant at **\$126.4 million** in FY 2005.

### **Promoting Greater Accountability and Flexibility for Court-Involved Youth**

#### *Juvenile Accountability Block Grant*

The 2002 re-authorized JJDP gives states and units of local government more flexibility to address juvenile crime and delinquency with a greater emphasis on prevention, alternatives to incarceration, graduated sanctions, treatment, and services. Sufficient 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 fully fund the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant.

JABG provides states and units of local government with funds to develop programs to promote greater accountability in the juvenile justice system. The 2002 legislation expands its reach to four new program purposes, providing additional services and treatment options 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 its authorized level of **\$350 million** in FY 2005.

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.

As a final note, on April 27, 2004, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition and the National Collaboration for Youth coordinated a bipartisan-sponsored briefing in the Senate, sponsored by Senators Specter, Leahy, DeWine and Kohl. Speakers included youth, program leaders, and law enforcement officers from the states of Florida, Virginia, Alaska, and New Hampshire, all with the same message – the programs funded by Title V and JABG are necessary to and successful in preventing at-risk youth from getting into trouble, promoting greater accountability among court-involved youth, and fighting crime in a way that truly works for youths, victims, and communities. A lieutenant from the juvenile division of a New Hampshire police department described his unit's successful efforts at implementing graduated sanctions with community youths and keeping teens in school. One police chief from the state of Alaska summed up the feelings of the law enforcement community when he noted that without necessary and sufficient funding for prevention and intervention programs, law enforcement is reduced to working against crime with "one hand tied behind our backs."

We thank you for your consideration in support of critical investments to assist our country's children and youth in growing up to lead healthy, productive and meaningful lives. We would also be happy to meet with you or your staff to discuss these issues further. Please feel free to contact Morna Murray at the Children's Defense Fund at 202/662-3577 if you have questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations:**

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Correctional Association  
American Counseling Association  
American Probation and Parole Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
Association on Programs for Female Offenders  
Center for Youth as Resources  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children and Adults with Attention Defecit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)  
Children's Defense Fund  
Church Women United  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders  
Covenant House  
Democracy Project  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
Justice Policy Institute  
Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Coalition  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Mid-Atlantic Juvenile Defender Center  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S., Washington Office  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Center for Youth Law  
National Mental Health Association  
National Network for Youth  
National Partnership for Juvenile Services  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office  
School Social Work Association of America  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
Volunteers of America  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.  
Youth Law Center

**State Organizations:**

Arizona: Children's Action Alliance  
California: The Advocacy and Learning Center (TALC)  
California: LEAD Students of America (LSA)  
Connecticut: Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance  
Illinois: Juvenile Justice Initiative  
Illinois: The Illinois Correctional Association  
Kentucky: Children's Law Center, Inc  
Louisiana: Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana  
Massachusetts: Children's Law Center of Massachusetts  
Maryland-Advocates for Children and Youth  
Maryland-Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition  
Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency.  
Missouri Juvenile Justice Association  
New Jersey: New Jersey Chapter - American Correction Association  
New York: New York State Juvenile Justice Coalition  
Ohio: Catholic Charities Health and Human Services-Cleveland, OH.  
Ohio: Yeura R. Venters Franklin County Public Defender  
Ohio: Juvenile Justice Coalition-Ohio  
Ohio: Justice Policy and Review Committee-Cleveland, OH

Texas: Texans Care For Children  
Virginia Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Wisconsin Council on Children & Families

cc: Senator Pete V. Domenici  
Senator Mitch McConnell  
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell  
Senator Sam Brownback  
Senator Ernest F. Hollings  
Senator Daniel K. Inouye  
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski  
Senator Patrick Leahy  
Senator Herbert H. Kohl  
Senator Patty Murray