

April 8, 2005

The Honorable James Sensenbrenner

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Sensenbrenner and Representative Conyers:

Attached is a letter on behalf of the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition and other national and state organizations urging you to oppose H.R. 1279 because of its draconian and punitive youth transfer provisions. As set forth in detail in our letter and as presented to the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security on April 5, 2005, the research clearly shows that prosecuting juveniles as adults is extremely dangerous and harmful for youth and is not effective in reducing and preventing youth violence.

Moreover, testimony and questioning of witnesses before the House Subcommittee on April 5th also made it clear that this bill is an unnecessary intrusion into the very strong presumption in favor of state prosecution of juvenile crime. States are already well equipped – indeed, better equipped, to handle juvenile matters than is the federal system.

The President recently has made numerous public statements on behalf of his administration's new anti-gang initiative that endorse the strengthening of local and community-based prevention and intervention efforts as the key to fighting youth gang violence.

We urge you to carefully consider these factors and oppose any legislation that will increase the prosecution of juveniles as adults in the federal system.

Sincerely,

Morna A. Murray

Co-chair

National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition