



**A CAMPAIGN OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE &
DELINQUENCY PREVENTION COALITION**

January 29, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you work on the Administration's budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2017, we urge you to continue to include adequate funding for key federal juvenile justice programs. We applaud your strong support of juvenile justice reform and your on-going efforts to provide necessary resources for critical existing juvenile justice programs, as well as some new investments to assist states in several key areas.

In order to ensure that state, local and private dollars continue to be leveraged effectively to promote public safety, prevent delinquency, and protect some of our most vulnerable children and youth, we ask that you include the following funding levels for juvenile justice programs as follows:

- \$80 million for the JJDPA Title II State Formula Grants Program;
- \$65 million for the JJDPA Title V Delinquency Prevention Program with no earmarks;
- \$30 million for Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) Program;
- \$25 million for the new Juvenile Justice Realignment Incentive Grants to help states implement evidence-based strategies that reduce youth incarceration and foster better outcomes for youth;
- \$25 million in community-based violence prevention initiatives, 50% of which will support public health approaches to violence prevention; and
- \$10 million for competitive grants that focus on girls in the juvenile justice system.

For over 40 years, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) has provided critical federal funding to states to comply with a set of core requirements designed to protect children from the dangers of adult jails and lockups; keep status offenders out of locked custody; and address racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system. Title II of JJDPA funding supports state compliance with these core protections and helps ensure that states have the resources to build effective state systems and Title V is the only federal program that provides delinquency prevention funding at the local level to reach youth at risk and help keep them out of the juvenile justice system. Ensuring adequate funding is especially critical as the Congress looks to reauthorize this landmark law this session.

In addition to these JJDPA programs, funding through the JABG program has supported state efforts to effectively strengthen supports for court-involved youth. Congress has zeroed out this funding in recent years, but we encourage you to continue to push to have these critical dollars restored. These funds support vital state efforts to effectively strengthen juvenile court services, such as behavioral health screening and



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assessment for court-involved youth and alternatives to detention.

We commend the Administration for continuing to propose investment in several targeted initiatives. Specifically, we support funding for the Juvenile Justice Realignment Incentive Grants which can help states implement systems reforms that promote the use of community-based alternatives to reduce overall youth incarceration and the prevalence of racial and ethnic disparities. It is critical that as we continue to work to reduce youth incarceration we also address problems in our systems that have seen racial and ethnic disparities grow. These grants will provide targeted resources to assist states build more effective, fairer systems and, as a result, better outcomes for youth and the public. We also support new monies for community-based violence prevention using a multi-sector, public health approach.

Finally, we applaud the Administration's commitment to invest in state and local efforts to better address the needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. Girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population and this program will help provide specific, targeted support for state efforts to implement best practices with respect to at-risk and system-involved girls.

While we were able to keep level funding in Title II, and received a modest increase in juvenile justice funding to support indigent counsel and tribal youth, appropriations for federal juvenile justice programs have declined to the *lowest levels in more than a decade*. It remains critical that the Administration put forward a budget proposal that reinforces the important role of the federal law recommending funding levels sufficient to ensure that states are able to continue to comply or to come into compliance with the JJDP, and to invest in innovative and cost-effective reforms that keep youth out of trouble and communities safe.

At a minimum, we ask that you include the same funding levels for these key programs put forth by the Administration in last year's budget proposal. Any less would move even further away from the targeted federal involvement that has historically provided critical national leadership to states in preventing youth from entering the justice system.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marie Williams".

Marie Williams, Esq., Executive Director
Coalition for Juvenile Justice

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marcy Mistrett".

Marcy Mistrett, CEO
Campaign for Youth Justice

cc: Loretta Lynch, Attorney General of the United States
Shaun Donovan, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Robert L Listenbee, Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention