



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

May 8, 2013

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah:

On behalf the 134,000 members and affiliates of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am writing to ask you to include adequate funding for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs in the Fiscal Year 2014 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill.

As the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare. APA and our members are committed to applying psychological science to promote the health, education, and development of children and youth.

Federal investments in state juvenile justice efforts are especially crucial in the current context of discretionary spending caps and sequestration. Evidence-based prevention and intervention programs not only reduce crime and promote positive youth development; they also save taxpayers more than \$5 in future costs for each dollar invested. In order to ensure that state, local, and private dollars are 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:

- **\$80 million for the JJDP A Title II State Formula Grants Program**

For more than 35 years, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A) has provided critical federal funding for states to prevent delinquency and to comply with federally-mandated core requirements to protect children from the dangers of placement in adult jails and lockups; to keep status offenders/non-delinquent children out of locked custody; and to address the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the justice system. Title II of the JJDP A supports state compliance with these core protections and helps states to build effective prevention and intervention systems. Our request, which is \$10 million above the President's proposal, reflects the true minimum costs of

the JJDP A Title II mandates and would help to make up for previous deep cuts in funding to the states.

- **\$65 million for the JJDP A Title V Delinquency Prevention Program with no earmarks**
Title V is the only federal program that provides delinquency prevention funding at the local level, bringing law enforcement and other stakeholders together to reach youth at risk and keep them out of the juvenile justice system. In recent years, Title V funds have been gutted and allocated for other than statutory purposes. Our request, which is \$9 million more than the President's proposal, represents a significant federal investment in effective, locally-based delinquency prevention programs. This investment is prudent because taxpayers save \$2 million for each child who is prevented from beginning a life of crime.

We also support the President's recommendation to provide \$20 million to help communities reduce the use of arrest and engagement with juvenile courts that unnecessarily push more young people into the justice system. This investment should not detract from resources available to communities through the Title V program, however, and we ask that these dollars be appropriated separately.

- **\$30 million for Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) Program**
JABG is used by states and localities to reduce juvenile offending by providing judges and other juvenile justice officials with a range of developmentally-appropriate options to hold youth accountable and get them back on track so they are less likely to reoffend. JABG funds are used to strengthen juvenile court services, such as alternatives to detention and mental health and substance abuse screening. This request is consistent with the President's proposal and just slightly less than the final FY 2013 allocation.
- **\$20 million for Juvenile Justice Realignment Incentive Grants**
We support the Administration's proposed initiative, the Juvenile Justice Realignment Incentive Grants, to help states invest in evidence-based strategies that reduce youth incarceration and recidivism and promote public safety and better outcomes for youth.
- **\$2 million grant program for girls in the juvenile justice system**
We support this targeted investment in a competitive grant program to help states and localities better address the needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. Girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population. This program will help provide specific, targeted support for state efforts to implement best practices for at-risk and system-involved girls.

We encourage you to invest in these key programs at the recommended levels. Restoring some of the critical funding that has been lost over the last decade and investing in prevention will benefit youth, communities, and our nation for years to come.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn P. Keita, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Public Interest Directorate