Trends in Juvenile Justice

Liz Ryan
Campaign for Youth Justice
Trends

• Juvenile violent crime reduction

• Youth incarceration rate reduction

• Reduction in prosecution of youth in adult court and placement in adult jails, prisons
Youth Incarceration

• Since 1995, rate of youth confinement has dropped by 41%

• 1995: 107,637 youth confined on any given day

• 2010: 70,792 youth confined on any given day

• Represents a 38 year low

• All regions of the country, some states 50%+ decline
Why youth incarceration decline matters

• States reducing costs - $88,000 / year to lock up a young person

• States reducing recidivism rates – youth prisons have very high rates of recidivism

• States ending use of inhumane and harmful approaches – states under consent decrees for inhumane treatment of youth

• Effective & less costly alternatives to incarceration utilized
How states reducing youth incarceration

- Limiting eligibility for correctional placements (such as banning placement of kids charged with misdemeanors from being placed)

- Changing fiscal incentives so that localities will use alternatives to incarceration (such as “Redeploy Illinois”)

- Investing in continuum of community based alternatives to incarceration
Youth in Adult Court

- 250,000 youth prosecuted in adult criminal court every year
- 100,000 youth placed in adult jails and prisons every year
- Youth prosecuted in adult criminal court 34% more likely to reoffend than youth charged with same offenses in juvenile court
- Consequences of adult court conviction are serious, negative, life-long and in some cases deadly for youth
Reduction in prosecution of youth in adult court

• In past 8 years, nearly half the states (23) have approved 40 individual pieces of legislation

• Policy reforms reduce automatic prosecution in adult court, halt placement in adult jails and/or prisons, and change sentencing policies

• Efforts led by bipartisan group of lawmakers and governors, supported by public, youth and communities
Importance for Congress

- Congress has invested resources in juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention efforts mainly through the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA)
  - These funds leverage state and local resources
  - Sets minimum standards in the states
  - JJDPA is overdue for reauthorization
  - Funding has been reduced over past decade
  - Opportunity to accelerate these trends
Contacts

Campaign for Youth Justice
www.campaignforyouthjustice.org

Act 4 Juvenile Justice campaign
www.act4jj.org

National Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Coalition
www.promotesafecommunities.org