



Juvenile Justice: By the Numbers

Juvenile Justice Costs

PROBLEM: On average states spend over \$400 dollars a day to incarcerate a juvenile. 33 states spend at least \$100,000 annually per incarcerated juvenile.ⁱ

FIX: *The Youth Justice Act provides grants for continuums of evidence-based prevention and intervention plans developed locally, to stem the tide of juveniles entering the system. Many of these programs have better outcomes than incarceration and cost significantly less.*

Juvenile Justice and Race

PROBLEM: In 2011, youth of colorⁱⁱ under the age of 21 represented 45% of the youth in the United States, but accounted for 71% of youth held in detention nationwide, and 66% of youth committed to juvenile facilities upon a determination of delinquency.ⁱⁱⁱ

FIX: *The Youth Justice Act requires states to take concrete steps to address Disproportionate Minority Contact at every point of contact juveniles have with the system.*

Juvenile Justice and Gender

PROBLEM: Researchers have found gender bias in the juvenile justice system since at least the 1970s, with courts confining girls for less serious offenses and longer periods of time than they confine boys for similar offenses, particularly status offenses.^{iv} Today, girls are the fastest-growing segment of the juvenile justice population, and status offenses still remain the primary reason that girls enter the juvenile justice system. (Source: Juvenile Justice Information Network)^v

FIX: *The Youth Justice Act eliminates the Valid Court Order (VCO) exception that allowed for status offenders to be held in secure facilities.*

Juvenile Justice and Mental Health and Substance Abuse

PROBLEM: In a study by Dr. Gail Wasserman and colleagues published in 2010, they found that more than half (51.9 percent) of youth in the juvenile justice system overall had at least one mental health

or substance use disorder. Of those youth just entering the system, 35% were found to have a mental health disorder; of those committed to a secure facility, 64% were found to have a mental health disorder. Many youth with disorders go untreated simply because of a lack of mental health services available to them in the community. This can result in disruptive behavior leading to an arrest and sometimes confinement in a juvenile facility --even though most have committed minor, non-violent offenses.^{vi}

FIX: *The Youth Justice Act provides incentive grants for states and localities to implement programs designed to address the mental behavioral health of juveniles in their systems.*

Juvenile Justice and Long-Term Outcomes

PROBLEM: A recent MIT study has found that teenagers who are incarcerated tend to have substantially worse outcomes later in life than those who avoid serving time for similar offenses, The research project, which studied the long-term outcomes of juveniles in Illinois, found that, controlling for other variables, juvenile incarceration lowers high-school graduation rates by 13 percentage points and increases adult incarceration by 23 percentage points.^{vii} (Source: MIT News)

FIX: *The Youth Justice Act provides localities with funding and direction from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to implement proven alternatives to incarceration.*

ⁱ Justice Policy Institute: Sticker Shock: Calculating the Full Price Tag for Youth Incarceration <http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/8477>

ⁱⁱ The term "youth of color" includes all Hispanic, African American, Native American and Asian youth.

ⁱⁱⁱ This information was configured from the 2011 population charts. Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W., "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2012," (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2013), accessed February 18, 2014, at <http://1.usa.gov/ManX4p>; M. Sickmund, T.J. Sladky, W. Kang, & C. Puzanchera, "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement," (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2013), accessed February 14, 2014, <http://1.usa.gov/19ZrBJA>.

^{iv} Francine T. Sherman, "Detention Reform and Girls: Challenges and Solutions," *Pathways to Juvenile Detention Reform*, vol. 13 (Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005): 17, <http://bit.ly/1juU4e0>.

^v National Council on Crime and Delinquency Center for Girls and Young Women, "A Call for Gender Equity for Girls in the Juvenile Justice System" (November 2008), 1, <http://bit.ly/1bKNQie>.

^{vi} Gail A. Wasserman, Larkin S. McReynolds, Craig S. Schwalbe, Joseph M. Keating, and Shane A. Jones, "Psychiatric Disorder, Comorbidity, and Suicidal Behavior in Juvenile Justice Youth," *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, Vol. 37, No. 12 (December 2010): 1361-1376, 1366, <http://bit.ly/1GQbGtH>.

^{vii} Study: Juvenile incarceration yields less schooling, more crime <https://newsoffice.mit.edu/2015/juvenile-incarceration-less-schooling-more-crime-0610>