



Fact Sheet

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE DEMOCRATS

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Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott • Ranking Member

The Youth Justice Act of 2015

The Youth Justice Act of 2015 would reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) of 1974, which has not been reauthorized by the Committee on Education and the Workforce in over a decade. The bill is centered on three core principles: education, safety and prevention.

- The Youth Justice Act of 2015 is based on S. 2999, a bipartisan bill that was introduced December 11, 2014 by Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Chuck Grassley (R-IA). S.2999 included:
 - Provisions to ensure the continuity of young people's education while incarcerated;
 - Clear guidance and directions for states and localities on how to reduce racial and ethnic disparities among incarcerated youth;
 - Improved standards for detaining youth to ensure they are not held with or near adults;
 - Better reporting of important juvenile justice metrics to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and
 - Provisions to ensure accountability in the use of federal resources devoted to juvenile justice initiatives.
- The Youth Justice Act of 2015 extends protections for children detained in the juvenile and adult systems through four mandates, which include:
 - Extending the 'Jail Removal' and 'Sight and Sound separation' core protections to all youth under the age of 18 being held pretrial, whether they are charged in juvenile or adult court;
 - Strengthening the Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO) core protection, which prohibits the locked detention of status offenders, by removing the valid court order (VCO) and Interstate Compact exceptions;
 - Strengthening the Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) core protection by requiring states to take concrete, measurable steps to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system;
 - Providing safe and humane conditions of confinement for youth in state or local custody by phasing out the use of JJDP funds for dangerous practices, encouraging states to adopt best practices and standards to eliminate these practices, and clarifying that isolation of longer than a few hours is a dangerous practice.
- The legislation also includes new Part G Grants for communities to plan and implement evidence-based prevention and intervention programs specifically designed to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang involvement, based on Rep. Scott's Youth P.R.O.M.I.S.E. Act of 2015 (H.R. 2197).