



GOVERNOR'S JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION

JIM DOYLE, GOVERNOR

DEIRDRE GARTON, CHAIR

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
Judiciary Committee
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

I was very pleased and honored to testify at the December 5, 2007, hearing of the Judiciary Committee entitled, "Reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act: Protecting Our Children and Our Communities." I truly appreciate the committee's consideration of and attention to the issues related to the reauthorization of this important statute.

Today, I am writing in response to questions you have posed to me, received December 18, 2007, as follows:

1. Would the availability of formula grant funds to states to support pre-release planning and reentry services targeted to youth offenders be helpful to your state?

Opportunities already exist within the formula grant program, Title II, as well as within the Juvenile Accountability Block Grants (JABG), to direct funding to pre-release planning and reentry services for youth offenders. Wisconsin has directed such funding to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and to the Boys and Girls Club of Milwaukee for this purpose.

I would suggest caution when considering amendments that would redirect priorities within the formula grants program. It is important to support State Advisory Groups' efforts to assess and prioritize needs for the use of such funds within their own states. Therefore, I do not support more requirements from the federal government about state use of such funds given the scarcity of resources in the current federal infrastructure and federal appropriations to the states for JJDP. Without considerably more new or incentive-based federal funds to states to support JJDP work, more requirements could tie the hands of the states that are working effectively to respond to the core requirements and other JJDP priorities that they have identified. If feasible, additional, targeted funding for prerelease and reentry services could be added to a separate juvenile-focused statute, such as legislation modeled after The Place to Call Home Act, H.R. 3409 or the Second Chance Act, H.R. 1593.

2. What role, if any, do your state's courts play in reviewing the aftercare or reentry plans of youth offenders exiting the juvenile or criminal justice systems?

Wisconsin law requires that, with some exceptions, each juvenile placed outside the home (except for a juvenile placed in a secure correctional facility) have a written permanency plan that addresses a myriad of factors, including a plan describing services that will be provided to ensure the juvenile's safety, and meet the juvenile's physical, emotional, social, educational, and vocational needs. The court must review the plan six months from the date that the juvenile was first removed from the home and every six months, thereafter, for as long as the juvenile is placed outside the home (Sec. 938.38 and Sec. 48.38).

Many thanks for the opportunity to respond to your questions. Please feel free to call upon me if any additional information can be beneficial to your efforts to improve the federal response in support of state and local efforts and improvements in juvenile justice. I may be reached at 608-266-3323. You may also call upon Tara Andrews, Deputy Executive Director for Policy, at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice, a national leadership association of State Advisory Groups based in Washington, DC: 202-467-0864, ext. 109.

Sincerely,



Deirdre Wilson Garton
Chair, The Wisconsin Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission