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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6275

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May 21, 2015

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

We thank you for your past commitment to funding critical juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs. During the fiscal year 2016 congressional appropriations process, we urge you to continue to make funding for these programs a priority.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), which we originally passed in 1974, established four core requirements with which states must comply in order to be eligible to receive formula grant funding under Title II of the Act. The JJDP's core requirements are designed to protect children from the dangers of placement in adult jails, keep runaways and other "status offenders" out of locked custody, and redress the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the justice system.

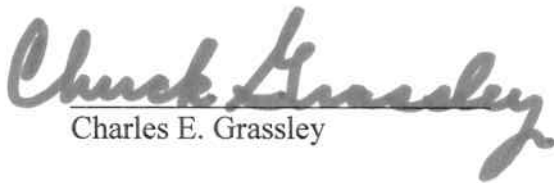
Conditioning the receipt of Title II state formula grants on compliance with the JJDP's core requirements is the primary means by which Congress encourages states to protect the safety of youth who come into contact with the criminal justice system. As noted by Fight Crime Invest in Kids: "Title II State Formula Grants support a broad range of effective, research-proven prevention and intervention programs [that] make our neighborhoods safer and save lives."

We are disappointed that U.S. House appropriations leaders have proposed to completely eliminate funding for the Title II program, as it is the centerpiece of federal efforts to promote juvenile justice and reduce juvenile delinquency. We note, too, that appropriators in the other chamber also have proposed to eliminate funding for the programs authorized under Title V of the JJDP as well as the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) funding streams. All of these programs already have seen substantial cuts since 2002.

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As cosponsors of legislation to reauthorize the key JJDPA programs, we believe that Congress should continue its support for the JJDPA Title II State Formula Grants Program at this critical time. We also urge you to restore adequate funding to the JJPDA Title V and JABG programs. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,


Charles E. Grassley


Sheldon Whitehouse