

JULY 7th - National Juvenile Justice Call-In Day

Action Alert: July 7th is National Juvenile Justice Call-In Day—Call your Congressional Representatives and Ask Them to Make Juvenile Justice a Priority This Year!

For too long, “tough on crime” political rhetoric has resulted in juvenile justice laws that are bad for youth and that ultimately increase crime. Research has proven time and time again that there are better, more effective ways to deal with juvenile offenders, and it is time for Congress to act to improve our nation’s juvenile justice system.

Time is running out-- if we don’t act now, juvenile justice reform will not happen this year!! We need you to let Congress know that voters care about juvenile justice!

Although there are many items on the agenda for Congress to do this year, three major juvenile justice initiatives remained stalled:

- Reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), which is *currently **three years overdue** for reauthorization*. The JJDP, first enacted in 1974, promotes the use of effective community-based alternatives to detention, keeps youth out of adult facilities, reduces the disproportionate involvement of youth of color in the system, and promotes other research-driven best practices in the juvenile justice system. Call on Congress to reauthorize the bill now!
- Increasing appropriations for juvenile justice programs, which were the only category of children’s programs that received a significant decrease in funding in the President’s proposed budget. In order for the States to make positive changes, they must receive the federal support they need to prevent youth crime and rehabilitate juvenile offenders. We have seen a sharp decline in funding for juvenile justice programs as a whole since FY 2002. Ask Congress to preserve and increase juvenile justice appropriations for the coming fiscal year!
- Passing the Youth PROMISE Act to promote proven, cost-effective prevention-based strategies to reduce youth crime. Under Youth PROMISE, representatives from the communities facing the greatest juvenile crime challenges will be able to develop a comprehensive plan to prevent youth crime through a coordinated prevention and intervention response.

Action item: We need your help! On July 7th, contact your two U.S. Senators and your U.S. House Representative and ask them to **make juvenile justice a priority in the 111th Congress by:**

- **Reauthorizing the JJDP;**
- **Increasing juvenile justice appropriations;** and
- **Passing the Youth PROMISE Act**

To contact your Congressional Representative and Senators, visit <http://sparkaction.org/content/national-juvenile-justice-call-day> and enter your zip code. The numbers for your representatives will appear along with talking points and a feedback form to report on the response you received.

Thank you for your help!

National Juvenile Justice Call-In Day-- Talking Points

Hello! My name is _____ and I am calling your office to ask you to make juvenile justice a priority for this Congress. This Congress can show voters that it cares about juvenile justice by reauthorizing the JJDP, increasing juvenile justice appropriations, and passing the Youth PROMISE Act.

I believe that the advancement of this comprehensive juvenile justice agenda would greatly help the efforts of youth-serving organizations [, including my organization, which _____].

Thank you for your time!

Optional:

The JJDP reauthorization bill – I support JJDP reauthorization because it:

- Promotes the use of effective community-based alternatives to detention and incarceration, such as the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI);
- Steers non-delinquent youth, like runaways and truants, away from locked facilities and into community- and family-based programs that help youth and families deal with the root issues;
- Protects youth by improving the way they are treated when in locked facilities, and by keeping them out of adult jails and lock-ups;
- Provides States with concrete guidance on how to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system; and
- Incentivizes States to develop and adopt best practices proven to reduce delinquency, increase youth and family success, and save communities money.

Federal juvenile justice appropriations – I support increasing juvenile justice appropriations because it would:

- Affirm Congress' commitment to reducing delinquency and keeping youth and communities safe;
- Strengthen the ability of States to implement evidence-based practices in their juvenile justice systems; and
- Ultimately save voters money in the long-run by decreasing crime and incarceration rates.

The Youth PROMISE Act – I support passing the Youth PROMISE Act because it:

- Gives local communities facing the greatest youth gang and crime risks the tools they need to develop comprehensive plans for implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies in the community;
- Enhances the efforts of local and State law enforcement in combating youth violence; and
- Calls for the development of a National Center for Proven Practices Research that will provide research-supported guidance on effective prevention and intervention programs.