



February X, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable José Serrano  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Moran and Serrano and Ranking Members Shaheen and Aderholt:

On behalf of the Act 4 JJ Coalition, a broad network of organizations representing states, territories, and the District of Columbia, we are writing to express how important it is to fully fund critical juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs for Fiscal Year 2021. **Federal investments play an essential role in state juvenile justice efforts to protect youth, prevent delinquency, and promote safe communities.** This was affirmed by Congress when it reauthorized the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) at the end of the 115th Congress.<sup>1</sup> The reauthorization brings this critical federal law up to date with evidence-based practices, research, and progress made in states across the country.

Under the newly reauthorized law, states are being asked to do more to receive their federal formula grants under Title II of the Act,<sup>2</sup> and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is also required to provide additional technical assistance to states and key stakeholders, as well as produce more research. Despite these requirements, overall federal support of key juvenile justice programs has declined by a little over forty percent since the last reauthorization in 2002, and we are concerned about the impact that any further reductions in funding would have on states' ability to serve youth.<sup>3</sup> While we were grateful to see an increase in funding for juvenile justice programs in FY 2020, the levels were still below authorizing

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<sup>1</sup> Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, H.R. 1809, 115th Cong. (1st Sess. 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Coalition for Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act: State Plan Requirements (Jan. 2018), available at <http://www.act4jj.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/State%20Plans%20H.R.%206964%20JJDP.pdf>; Act 4 Juvenile Justice, Overview of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 (Dec. 2018), available at <http://www.act4jj.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/JJDP%20Reauthorization%20Summary%20December%202018.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> ACT 4 JUVENILE JUSTICE, JUVENILE JUSTICE FEDERAL FUNDING CHART (2020), available at <http://www.act4jj.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/Historic%20Funding%20Chart%20-%20FY20.pdf>.

levels. We strongly encourage you to consider raising the funding levels in line with the reauthorization bill, including the following amounts:

***Require full implementation of the JJDP Act by appropriating \$176 million dollars for Titles II & V of the Act in FY2021 budget, including:***

- **\$80,000,000** to carry out programs under the Charles Grassley Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program, Title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as authorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018;
  - of which not more than 5% goes to provide training and technical assistance to states; and
  - of which not more than 10% goes to support research conducted by OJJDP.

Title II of JJDP Act provides federal funding to states to promote delinquency prevention and assist them to comply with federally-mandated core requirements designed to protect children from the dangers of placement in adult jails and lockups; keep status offenders/non-delinquent children out of locked custody; and address the racial and ethnic disparities faced by youth of color in the justice system.

- **\$96,053,401** to carry out programs under in the Incentive Youth Promise Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2018, Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as authorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018;
  - of which, 11% goes to support the Tribal Youth Program; and
  - the remaining \$86.4 million goes to support the Title V PROMISE grants.

Title V is the only federal program that provides delinquency prevention funding at the local level to reach at-risk youth and help keep them out of the juvenile justice system. The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 renames this title “Incentive Grants for Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (PROMISE)” and expands the uses of this grant program to include 29 funding areas, and establishes local youth councils to develop prevention programming that ensures needs of at-risk youth are being met.

Tribal Youth are over-represented in state and local delinquency systems. The Juvenile Justice Reform Act provides an increased percentage in Title V funding for Tribal Youth Programs to ensure Tribes are able to invest in traditionally-grounded, trauma-based delinquency prevention programs.

In addition, we urge you to include funding for additional juvenile justice programs, including:

- **\$30,000,000** for the Tiffany Joslyn Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Act of 2019 (H.R. 494), as passed by unanimous consent the U.S. House of Representatives in the 115th and 116th Congress.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Tiffany Joslyn Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Act of 2019, H.R. 494, 116th Cong. (2019).

Historically, funding through the JABG program has supported state efforts to effectively strengthen supports for court-involved youth. These funds support vital state efforts to effectively strengthen juvenile court services, such as behavioral health screening and assessment for court-involved youth and alternatives to detention.

***The JJDPAs have been an extremely successful program***, yet cuts to these programs have weakened the federal-state partnership and stymied national, state, and local progress in this area. Many states have already had to significantly reduce services. Further cuts would inhibit the improvements made by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018 and result in fewer youth having access to services designed to keep them from engaging in unlawful behaviors and penetrating deeper into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

It is critical that Congress fully fund these programs as authorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act in order for implementation of the new requirements of the law to be successful. Congress must affirm this important federal-state partnership to protect children and to invest in innovative and cost-effective reforms that keep youth out of trouble and communities safe. The Act 4 JJ Coalition urges you to consider these critical supports for youth and communities in this year's CJS Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,