

Juvenile Justice Update™

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Word From Washington

by Marion Mattingly

Update on the JJDP A

No JJDP A Action in 111th Congress. When it comes to reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A), the 111th Congress was a bust. Time ran out for reauthorization of the JJDP A in the 111th Congress, making a wait of more than eight years since the last reauthorization in 2002.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2009, S. 678, was introduced and approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2010, but it never made it to the floor. The Committee's report was issued on August 5, 2010. Although advocates worked diligently for passage, they were unsuccessful. It is unclear what is in store with the new 112th Congress, but there are concerns. While Patrick Leahy (D-VT) will continue as Chair of the Judiciary Committee and remains committed to reauthorization of the JJDP A, the general climate in Congress of opposition to new spending may mean that the content of any bill may look significantly different than it would have before the elections. Charles Grassley (R-IA) is now the ranking member instead of Jeff Sessions (R-AL).

Changes in the House May Have an Impact. On the other hand, the Republican takeover of the House means changes that will be important. In the House, John Kline (R-MN) chairs the Education and Workforce Committee. Yes, the name of the Committee has

See WASHINGTON, page 13

Police and Juvenile Justice: Contracting the Net

by H. Ted Rubin

Editor's Note: In October 2010, Ted Rubin traveled to Kansas City to attend the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Inter-site Conference. Bringing together 600 juvenile justice practitioners, advocates, and experts, this is one of the nation's larger juvenile justice conferences. Missouri was chosen as the site of the annual JDAI conference because of the state's successful juvenile justice reform efforts, including both its work to safely reduce the number of youth held in detention and the nationally renowned "Missouri Model" of smaller, more rehabilitative facilities for committed youth. "The Missouri sites have been among the most successful nationwide," said Bart Lubow, Director, Juvenile Justice Strategy Group at the Casey Foundation, the JDAI program's funder. "They have significantly and safely reduced the number of youth who are kept in detention, saving Missouri communities hundreds of thousands of dollars in detention costs while improving outcomes for these young people at the same time." The information exchanged at the conference inspired this article.

A Changing Juvenile Justice Paradigm

The juvenile justice paradigm is now changing. We are moving away from an excessive practice of locking juveniles up in juvenile institutions or adult prisons. We have gotten smarter and have the evidence to show we can often better protect the public and provide rehabilitative services in the juvenile court and in the community. We also have the

communication skills to promote this evidence and our cause with the citizenry and policy makers.

This moment of progressive retrofitting coincides with significant shortfalls in state and local governmental tax revenues that have prompted closings of juvenile institutions and loss of adult prison beds and staff reductions up and down the ladders of employees who encounter offending juveniles in a professional capacity.

The ongoing reduction in official juvenile crime, and adult crime as well, plays a role. There is substantially more public interest in seeing youth obtain the assistance they need to move forward with their lives than there is in committing them to state juvenile or adult institutions where they often make little gain either during their stay or following their release.

Numerous police departments now experience this changing fiscal reality and are aware of today's changing crime concerns. More find themselves concurring with the more progressive directions articulated by those in the advocacy community.

Charting a New Common Ground

This article encourages juvenile court judges and justice system officials to join with mayors and county commissioners, lawmakers, police leaders and sheriffs, education leaders, prosecutors, public

See JUVENILE JUSTICE, next page

IN THIS ISSUE

Kentucky Looks at the School-to-Prison Pipeline	3
From the Literature	5
Language Impairments Among Offenders.....	9
"Pathways to Desistance" Study Helps Understanding of Relationship Between Delinquency and Substance Use	11

JUVENILE JUSTICE, from page 1

defenders, other state and local officials, and influential citizens to recast the paradigm for the handling of juvenile offenses. All of these individuals should consider:

- The current costs of handling of juvenile offenders and the shrinking budgets at local and state levels;
- Research findings on conditions of confinement and the harmful impact of juvenile and adult institutionalization on many juveniles;
- Detention alternatives that can safely substitute for costly secure pretrial detention;

Family Therapy, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, Aggression Replacement Training) that are cost efficient and reduce the need for far more costly institutional care;

- Research findings on the role of adolescent brain development on behavior;
- Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) practices by police, schools, juvenile detention personnel, court intake staff, prosecutors, and judges; and
- The impact of statutes that give prosecutors the discretion to try juveniles as adults without judicial oversight of the process or which permit extended

in Kansas City organized a broad and potent 24-person committee (21 of the members from outside the court system) with a directive from the family court's administrative judge to determine and set juvenile justice policy and practice in that sprawling community. One committee member's concern, that "I don't want our high-needs kids locked up with kids who have committed serious offenses," resonated. Other important factors were the adoption of a high-quality detention assessment instrument and data that demonstrated that reducing detention had not resulted in increased juvenile crime levels.

Rick Wilson, Captain, of the Tucson, Arizona, Police Department, also spoke of his department's efforts to increase patrol officers' understanding of youth, and of approaches undertaken to address racial and ethnic disparities in order to reduce detention populations. "It is no easy process to take us out of our comfort zone," he stated, "and to have us sit down with community people who have a different slant on how we should handle our functioning." He noted that "JDAI is data driven, and we can show our own work group what the numbers say. We are working on reducing DMC. Yet our most difficult audience is our own department."

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- Police diversion practices that can save police departments time and money;
- Juvenile court and prosecutorial intake practices that can successfully divert youth;
- The impact of excessive referrals of juveniles by schools to courts for punishment of minor school-based offenses;
- Evidence-based programs (Multisystemic Therapy, Functional

juvenile institutionalization beyond that needed for rehabilitation.

Police Leaders Collaborate on Detention Reform

Kevin Masters, Deputy Chief of the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department, speaking to this past October's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (the Annie E. Casey Foundation's JDAI program) Conference, stated, "We used to over-detain, and to turn good kids bad." In response, officials

Training of Police: Other Conference Presenters

Lieutenant David Virtue, Portland Police Bureau, Portland, Oregon,

See JUVENILE JUSTICE, page 10

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