



**For Immediate Release  
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**Campaign for Youth Justice endorses “Juvenile Justice Improvement Act”  
Calls on Congress to pass juvenile justice legislation this session**

*Washington, D.C.* – Today, the Campaign for Youth Justice endorsed the proposed “Juvenile Justice Improvement Act” legislation, to be introduced by U.S. Representative Chris Murphy (D-CT). The legislation would reduce reliance on incarceration as a response to juvenile crime and promote effective practices and programs.

“This legislation is needed to provide safeguards for youth in the justice system,” says Liz Ryan, Executive Director of the Campaign for Youth Justice. “We applaud Representative Murphy for his leadership in introducing this critical legislation especially to ensure that youth are not placed in adult jails.”

On average 7,500 kids are in an adult jail on any given day. Research shows that many of these kids spend time pretrial in adult jails with adults and this is harmful to kids and to public safety.

In recent polling data, commissioned by the MacArthur Foundation, the public strongly opposes placing kids in adult jails. The public solidly favored investing in effective approaches in the juvenile justice system.

According to a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Task Force, in a November, 2007 *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, youth who are prosecuted as adults are, on average, 34 percent more likely to commit crimes than youth retained in the juvenile justice system.

Under the “Juvenile Justice Improvement Act”, states would be required to remove youth from adult jails and states with laws that keep kids out of adult prisons would continue to receive support from the federal government. Additionally, the bill would improve safety of juveniles in custody, by requiring states to develop procedures that eliminate dangerous practices, increase the use of effective behavior management systems, provide training for staff on effective techniques, and encourage states to develop safe staffing levels. Finally, the bill would disallow locking up status offenders – youth who have not been charged with any offense – and provides supports for these youth in the community, as well as provide incentives for states to use “best practices” such as effective community-based alternatives to incarceration in implementing these reforms.”

The Campaign for Youth Justice is a national organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating youth under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system.

**For more information, visit: [www.campaignforyouthjustice.org](http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org).**