



BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 23, 2010

Contact: Eric Solomon
(202) 558-3580 x20
(202) 253-5557 (cell)
esolomon@cfyj.org

Parent Advocate Testifies for Action in Congress and Justice Department to Protect Youth in Juvenile and Adult Correctional Facilities

Washington, D.C. – Today, the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security is examining recent reports on the sexual assault in the juvenile and criminal justice systems and hear testimony from Grace Bauer, a parent advocate from the Campaign for Youth Justice, urging Congress to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and asking the Department of Justice to finalize without delay the strong national standards released by the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC) last June.

The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission released a report in June 2009 finding that “more than any other group of incarcerated persons, youth incarcerated with adults are probably at the highest risk for sexual abuse” and recommended that youth be housed separately from adults.

“Until the NPREC hearings, I wondered if this nation had the courage or the political will to look beyond media hype and the political grandstanding on being tough on crime to get to the heart of what happens to millions that belong the next generation of Americans,” said Bauer. “After years of documented cases of sexual assault to children in juvenile facilities, I find it appalling that state administrators still doubt the outcomes of such studies and reports. Many administrators and other state government authorities continue to doubt the repeated findings of sexual assault in their facilities and can’t accept the overwhelming evidence that it exists.”

In light of the Commission’s findings and recent studies by the Bureau of Justice, Bauer is “calling on Congress to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which would provide protections to youth in both juvenile and adult facilities. I also call on the Department of Justice to fully implement the recommendations of the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission.”

The NPREC report finds that youth (under 18) in adult jails and prisons are at “extreme risk” of sexual victimization and that at a minimum they should be separated from adults. The report also cites concerns that in order to protect youth, correctional administrators might place youth in isolation or in solitary confinement, which could be detrimental to youths mental health and recommends instead that correctional administrators consider placing youth in facilities more suited to their needs, such as juvenile detention or juvenile correctional facilities.

Although there is no national data system that collects data on youth transferred to the adult system, researchers estimate that as many as 200,000 youth are prosecuted as adults each year. According to recent reports from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Justice, youth who are tried as adults are more likely to reoffend than youth retained in the juvenile justice system.

###

The Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) 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.