

CALL TO ACTION: SUPPORT JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM



The bipartisan, multibranch Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Task Force assessed the State's juvenile justice system and reached the following conclusions:

- "Most youth are not on a path toward adult crime, and over-involvement in the system can increase their likelihood of reoffending.
- Most youth in the juvenile justice system have little or no prior history of delinquency, have not committed a felony or a person offense, and do not score as high risk to reoffend.
- Out-of-home placement consumes the majority of taxpayer spending—even though services for youth living at home are generally more effective.
- Outcomes for youth show large disparities by race and geography even for similar behavior."

The Task Force put forth several recommendations for reforming Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. These reforms promote safety, the reduction of disparities, the increased use of diversion, and reduction in the use of secure placement.

Children First encourages you to support the following bills (Sponsor – Sen. Lisa Baker), which include several of the Juvenile Justice Task Force's recommendations:

- **SB 169** requires juvenile placements to be reviewed every three months, instead of six.
- **SB 170** standardizes the process for expungement of juvenile cases and, in some cases, shortens the timeline for expungement.
- **SB 168** sets a state reimbursement rate for certain county expenses in juvenile cases, including public defenders and other court costs.
- **SB 167** explicitly includes juvenile justice in the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' funding goals.

By implementing these recommendations, we can support youth to take accountability for their actions while helping them stay on the path to successful adulthood.

For more information, contact Children First:
Stefanie Arbutina, Vulnerable Youth Policy Director
stefaniea@childrenfirstpa.org

**children
FIRST**
THE ADVOCATE FOR KIDS
childrenfirstPA.org