

## Murphy Introduces Legislation to Reform Federal Juvenile Justice Policy

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WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) reintroduced his legislation to reform federal juvenile justice policy to mirror many of the successes in juvenile justice reform in Connecticut. Every day, 90,000 youth in our country are incarcerated in juvenile correctional facilities - many for noncriminal acts such as running away or violating curfew laws. Even more shockingly, 7,500 of our nation's young people sit in adult jails on any given day, increasing these youths' likelihood of recidivism, victimization, and suicide.

By placing youth involved in the juvenile and adult criminal justice system in developmentally-appropriate and safe environments and by using evidenced-based rehabilitative programs and services, Murphy believes youth involved in these systems can emerge as positive and productive members of the community and workforce.

"We are missing an opportunity to help these kids get back on the right track. By keeping kids out of adult lock ups and investing in reform programs that are actually proven to work, we could give them a chance to lead a productive life, keep them out of jail in the future, and improve the safety of our communities," said Murphy.

Murphy is pushing for Congress to consider the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevent Act (JJDP) this Congress, and include his legislation, the Juvenile Justice Improvement Act, in its overhaul. Murphy's bill will:

- Protect youth prosecuted as adults from being held in an adult jail or lock-up pre-trial except in very limited circumstances;

- Allow states that currently have the ability to and choose to house youth convicted and sentenced as adults in juvenile corrections facilities to retain this flexibility;

- Keep youth out of locked facilities for non-criminal status offenses (i.e., violating curfew laws, running away, possessing alcohol or tobacco);

- Encourage states to take concrete steps to eliminate the use of dangerous practices that create an unreasonable risk of physical injury, pain or psychological harm to youth in juvenile facilities;

- Reward states, through incentive grants, that are establishing best practices in the juvenile justice system by effectively reducing or eliminating dangerous practices in juvenile facilities, improving public safety and rehabilitation of delinquent and at-risk youths, and using evidence-based programs to address mental health treatment needs of juveniles.

Murphy was a leader on juvenile justice issues at the state level. He was a leading sponsor of legislation to move 16 and 17-year-olds out of the adult prison system and into more appropriate rehabilitative incarceration. With Murphy's leadership, in 2006 the Connecticut Legislature passed legislation to start planning for the transition of 16 and 17-year-olds out of the adult prison system.

"Congressman Murphy has been a staunch advocate for juvenile justice reform since his days in the Connecticut Senate. We appreciated working along side him to promote significant improvements to the juvenile justice system here and applaud his efforts to ensure federal laws reflect best practices in juvenile justice policy and practice," said Abby Anderson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance.

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