



As the 114th Congress enters its second session, we look back on the progress of legislation that was introduced in 2015. All of the Senate and House bills listed below have until the end of 2016 to earn approval from Congress and the President.

Enacted into Law

[The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016](#) was approved by both chambers and signed into law by President Obama on December 18, 2015. The bill includes \$270.16 million for juvenile justice programs including \$55.5 million for Title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act; \$10 million for tribal youth; \$5 million to address gang and youth violence education and prevention; \$2 million to address the needs of girls in the justice system; and \$2.5 million to assist with indigent defense for children. While the bill did not include funds for the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant program, it did mark the first increase in federal juvenile justice funding in nearly three years.

Senate

[S. 675, the REDEEM Act](#), would, among other things, provide incentives to states for sealing and expunging records for youth who commit non-violent offenses early in life. The bill, first introduced in 2014, was reintroduced on March 9, 2015 by [Senator Cory Booker \(D-NJ\)](#) and [Senator Rand Paul \(R-KY\)](#). The measure was referred to the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#). [H.R. 1672](#), an identical measure, was introduced in the House by [Representative Chaka Fattah \(D-PA\)](#). The bill has [seven co-sponsors](#). Both bills await a vote in committee.

[S. 1169, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2015](#), would strengthen and reauthorize the [Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act \(JJCPA\)](#), which was last reauthorized in 2002. The measure was introduced April 30 by [Senator Charles Grassley \(R-IA\)](#) and [Senator Sheldon Whitehouse \(D-RI\)](#). It was referred to the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#), which approved the bill in July. The measure is awaiting consideration by the full Senate.

[S. 1770, the Youth Promise Act \(YPA\)](#), would provide communities with grant funds for evidence-based and promising practices aimed at preventing and intervening in gang activity and other negative youthful behaviors. The bill was introduced by [Senator Robert Casey \(D-PA\)](#) and is co-sponsored by [Senator James Inhofe \(R-OK\)](#), [Senator Gary Peters \(D-MI\)](#), and [Senator David Vitter \(R-LA\)](#). It was referred to the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#). A similar measure, [H.R. 2197](#), was introduced in the House by [Representative Bobby Scott \(D-VA\)](#). This bill currently has [forty one co-sponsors](#). It has been referred to the [House Committee on Education and the Workforce](#) for consideration.

[S. 1850, the Prohibiting the Detention of Youth Status Offenders Act of 2015](#), would eliminate the incarceration of youth for status offense behaviors such as running away from home and skipping school. The current Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJCPA) prohibits incarceration of youth for status offenses unless these behaviors violate a valid court order. S. 1850 gives states one year to stop incarcerating youth for status offenses that violate a valid court order. The bill was introduced on July 23 by [Senator Robert Casey \(D-PA\)](#). It was referred to the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#). A similar bill, [H.R. 3782](#), was introduced on October 23

by [Representative Tony Cárdenas \(D-CA\)](#), and was referred to the [House Committee on Education and the Workforce](#). Both bills are awaiting committee consideration.

[S. 1965, known as the MERCY Act](#), would limit the use of solitary confinement on youth who are under federal custody. The measure was introduced August 5 by [Senator Cory Booker \(D-NJ\)](#). It is co-sponsored by [Senator Rand Paul \(R-KY\)](#), [Senator Mike Lee \(R-UT\)](#), and [Senator Richard Durbin \(D-IL\)](#). It was referred to the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#). Legislation in the House, [H.R. 2823](#), would also limit the solitary confinement of youth. That measure was introduced by [Representative Tony Cárdenas \(D-CA\)](#) on June 18. Both bills are awaiting committee consideration.

[S. 2123, the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015](#), was introduced in October and includes several juvenile justice provisions including limitations on the use of solitary confinement on young people; provisions that permit young people who are serving juvenile life without parole to have their sentences reheard after 20 years; and measures that would seal and expunge certain juvenile records, similar to provisions included in Senator Booker's REDEEM Act. The bill was approved by the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) on Oct. 26. [H.R. 3713](#), would also reform sentencing, but does not include juvenile justice provisions. That bill was approved by the [House Judiciary Committee](#) on November 18. Both bills await approval from their full chambers.

House of Representatives

[H.R. 68, the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Reauthorization and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Act of 2015](#), would reauthorize the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant and allocate "such sums as necessary" for the grants in the federal budget for FY2016-2020. A portion of the funding would also be reallocated to help combat bullying. The bill was introduced on January 6 by [Representative Sheila Jackson Lee \(D-TX\)](#). It was referred to the [House Judiciary Committee](#) where it awaits a vote.

[H.R. 2797, the School Disciplinary Fairness Act of 2015](#), would amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to create the Office of School Disciplinary Policy within the [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#). This new office would be responsible for reducing the number of young people who are arrested or incarcerated for behaviors that occur while they are at school. The bill was introduced on June 16 by [Representative Cedric Richmond \(D-LA\)](#). It was referred to the [House Education and Workforce Committee](#) and the [House Judiciary Committee](#), where it awaits a vote.

[H.R. 3155, Kalief's Law](#), would, among other things, limit the use of temporary seclusion and require that young people receive speedy trials. The bill was introduced on July 22 by [Representative Sheila Jackson Lee \(D-TX\)](#) and was referred to the [House Judiciary Committee](#) for review. The bill was created in response to the death of Kalief Browder in June 2015.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments in [Montgomery v. Louisiana](#) on October 13. The case seeks to determine whether the court's earlier ruling in [Miller v. Alabama](#) should be applied retroactively. In *Miller*, the court held that mandatory sentences of juvenile life without parole were unconstitutional.