

Special Federal Policy Update



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Senate Passes Legislation to Reauthorize JJDPA!

Both the Senate and House have passed long-awaited legislation to reauthorize and update the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP A). The Act, first passed in 1974 and last reauthorized in 2002, provides four core protections for young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

On August 1, the Senate approved [S. 860](#), legislation that was sponsored by Sen. Judiciary Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). The House passed similar legislation, [H. 1809](#), on May 24. Rep. Jason Lewis (R-MN), Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), and Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) headed up the push for House reauthorization.

"We are grateful for this bi-partisan effort in the House and Senate to help improve the lives of our most vulnerable young people. We are glad to see Congress coming together to take this important action," said Naomi Smoot, Executive Director of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice.

What's Next?

While similar, the Senate and House bills contain some differing language. As originally enacted, the JJDP A required states to stop incarcerating young people for status offense behaviors such as running away from home or skipping school. An exception to this rule was added in 1984 which permits states to securely detain youth when these behaviors are in violation of a valid court order. The House bill aims to phase this exception out. A similar provision was removed from the Senate bill following an objection from Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR).

This, and other differences between the two bills, will have to be addressed, with the House and Senate agreeing on a joint version of the bill before it can be signed into law.

"It is our hope that the final legislation will include a phase out of the valid

court order exception, and bring an end to the incarceration of children who are in need of services, not jail time," Smoot said.

Appropriations Bills Also Moving Forward

The House, Senate, and Administration have also begun discussing Fiscal Year 2018 funding levels for programs established under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The House appropriations proposal does not include funding for Title II or Title V of the JJDP, core provisions of the Act which are used to carry out vital delinquency prevention and intervention programs. The Senate and the Administration, meanwhile, have proposed modest increases for these programs.

The President's budget proposal would provide \$58 million for Title II and \$17 million for Title V. The Senate proposal includes \$60 million for Title II and \$19 million for Title V. Currently, Title II and Title V are funded at \$55 million and \$14.5 million respectively.

An agreement on Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations must be reached before the new federal year starts on Oct. 1.

CJJ strongly supports reauthorization of the JJDP as an essential step forward in improving public safety in communities across this country and the lives of children and youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

The [Coalition for Juvenile Justice \(CJJ\)](#) envisions a nation where fewer children are at risk of delinquency; and if they are at risk or involved with the justice system, they and their families receive every possible opportunity to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. CJJ is a nationwide coalition of State Advisory Groups (SAGs), individuals, organizations, and allies dedicated to preventing children and youth from becoming involved in the courts and upholding the highest standards of care when youth are charged with wrongdoing and enter the justice system.

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