

NEWS RELEASE

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The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) Applauds President Obama's Appointment of Robert Listenbee, Jr. as OJJDP Administrator

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) applauds and thanks President Obama for appointing Robert Listenbee, Jr. as Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the U.S. Department of Justice. CJJ has called upon President Obama to appoint a permanent administrator to OJJDP since he first entered office in 2009, and they could not be more delighted with his ultimate decision to appoint Robert Listenbee, Jr. so early in this term of office.

"Administrator Listenbee is a visionary, collaborative, and respected leader in juvenile justice policy and practice reform -- he's the right person at a critical time," said Nancy Gannon Hornberger, CJJ's Executive Director. CJJ members nationwide are pleased that President Obama has heard our call and chosen someone with a strong foundation in juvenile justice, and a track record consistent with CJJ's guiding principles and goals.

Robert Listenbee, Jr. embodies all of the core criteria CJJ requested in an Administrator: commitment to prevention and fair, effective interventions; firsthand knowledge of juvenile justice practices; willingness to embrace and support the statutory roles of the State Advisory Groups (SAGs); and the desire and ability to foster cross-disciplinary and interagency collaborations, among other criteria.

"We are thrilled that Robert Listenbee, Jr. has been appointed Administrator of OJJDP," said Susan Kamp, CJJ's National Chair from Vermont. "He has served as a long-time member of Pennsylvania's state advisory group and has a keen understanding of the realities faced by our members as they work in their vital role as leaders and liaisons working with federal and state government," explained Kamp.

Administrator Listenbee has played a leading role in many efforts to reform local and statewide juvenile justice and court service systems in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. He has also co-chaired Attorney General Eric Holder's Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence. His intimate knowledge of these issues will be even more critical now, as the Administration responds comprehensively to youth violence prevention in the wake of the tragic shooting in Newtown (CT), and during a time when evidence-informed juvenile justice reforms are taking hold.

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“CJJ looks forward to working with Administrator Listenbee on key priorities: reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), restoring federal appropriations for nationwide juvenile justice programs, and enhancing school engagement while reversing the school-to-prison pipeline,” said Gannon Hornberger.

Over the past 10 years, juvenile justice funding has been cut by more than 50 percent, causing states to discontinue programs and functions to safeguard youth in the system from harm and prevent delinquency. In light of the Administration’s national priority to provide additional services and supports for youth violence prevention following the tragedy in Newtown, CJJ calls on OJJDP and others to continue and increase support for effective evidence-based approaches.

In fact, Administrator Listenbee’s home state, Pennsylvania, provides a unique example of the type of approach that would benefit all states. Pennsylvania has implemented a spectrum of evidence-based programs for youth violence prevention across the state, known as *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*. The impact has been noteworthy. On January 15, 2013, Pennsylvania Governor Corbett announced a plan to invest \$10 million in prevention and intervention strategies for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders. The plan will include assessing the individual risks and needs of youth, ensuring community protection, and identifying a continuum of high-quality, innovative services for youthful offenders. The plan was the result of a collaborative effort of the Pennsylvania SAG – the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency – the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, and the Department of Public Welfare. Pennsylvania has successfully reduced its residential placements and closed a juvenile facility saving taxpayers \$73 million over the course of five years. This is exactly this type of collaboration and vision that we know Administrator Listenbee will bring to the national stage.

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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) 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.