

# Legislative Meeting Talking Points

CJJ is pleased to provide these talking points to support you in your visits with Members of Congress. As always, feel free to modify and supplement these talking points as needed to leave the best impression and reflect the needs, opportunities and successes in your state.

## Introductions:

- Introduce everyone.
- Thank them for taking the time to meet with you.
- Introduce and describe your interest in juvenile justice.  
*We are members of the Coalition for Juvenile Justice (and a member of your state's SAG if applicable). I am from (insert state and description of your interest in juvenile justice and how it impacts your community.)*
- Briefly introduce and describe CJJ.  
*CJJ is a nationwide coalition of State Advisory Groups and allies dedicated to preventing children and youth from being involved in the courts and upholding the highest standards of care when youth are charged with wrongdoing and enter the justice system.*
- As authentically as possible, thank them for the support and responsiveness of their office to your priorities and concerns.

## Appropriations:

- Provide one clear, strong example that emphasizes return-on-investment.  
*With the support of federal funding, (your state) has made tremendous strides in reducing youth delinquency and improving the effectiveness of our juvenile justice system. (Example)*
- Explain how federal funds are leveraged in your state.  
*These federal investments are highly leveraged at the state, local, and tribal levels, and help us make progress that we otherwise would not make. (Example if relevant)*
- Talk about the importance of continued federal investments.  
*Our progress however is in jeopardy. In (your state), federal cuts have reduced funding by (overall amount, or the decrease for each Title II, Title V, and JABG). (Try to provide an example of a program that you could no longer fund, or how many less children a program can serve because of a decrease in funding – as specific as possible. If state cuts have added to these existing challenges, highlight that here as well.)*
- Ask for their support.  
*We need Senator/Representative (Name) to support higher numbers for juvenile justice programs. Can we count on Senator/Representative (Name) to do that?*

## JJDPA Implementation:

- Emphasize progress in your state.  
*(Give examples of the importance of: reduction in racial and ethnic disparities, status offender reform, detention reduction, etc.)*
- Talk about why the federal support is needed to fully implement the JJDPA.

*The JJDPa was reauthorized in 2018 to better reflect the good work happening in the states, and to keep shining a light on areas where we need to do better – like reducing incarceration of youth who pose no danger to the public, reducing racial and ethnic disparities, making sure that non-delinquent youth are not incarcerated with youth who have committed delinquent offense, etc. Since the reauthorization though, we have received minimal guidance on how to implement these important changes, including how to ensure young people awaiting trial in the criminal justice system are not housed in adult facilities.*

- Ask for their support (if you are able to: please consult your state's lobbying guidelines).

*We are asking Senator/Representative (name) to work with leaders on this issue to provide federal support to ensure implementation of the JJDPa. Can we count on Senator/Representative (name) to do this?*

## **Conclusion:**

- Ask any questions that you may have.

*Is there any information that we can get you immediately?*

- Ensure that there is space for the staff or legislator you're meeting with to also ask questions. (If there are questions you don't immediately know the answer to, let them know you will get back to them as soon as possible.)
- Please be sure to thank Senator/Representative (name) for his/her support of these critical issues.

*Thank you again for your time, and if you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact (your information).*