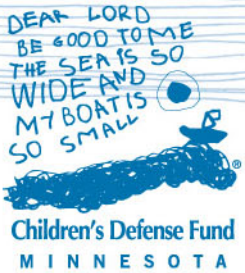
10-10-10 March for Children Because

All Children Need a Fair Juvenile Justice System



When children lose their way and enter the legal system, it is imperative that their status as children is respected and that appropriate services are provided.

While it is important to hold youth accountable for their actions and protect the public safety, it is also extremely important to protect the well-being of youth by creating an effective system that works to rehabilitate and redirect them onto a path to productive adulthood.

- Many juvenile records of criminal charges are made public. Parents and youth offenders are often unaware of the long lasting impact and stigma caused from this. All juveniles deserve to be able to move past these charges.
- Using a standardized assessment tool to determine needs and likelihood of re-offending ensures secure detention is used only as needed.
- Creating community-based alternatives to detention to serve and redirect youth into positive behavior instead of stigmatizing them as criminals.
- Research shows that adolescent brains are not wired to weigh risk adequately.
- Differentiation between severity of offense, age of offender and mental health needs must be considered on an individual basis when sentencing.
- Often resources for female youth offenders are limited.

We rob thousands of youth of their futures and our state of vital human resources when we focus on punishment rather than early intervention, diversion and prevention.

- Minnesota spends 3.7 times as much per prisoner as per public school student.

Youth of color are over-represented at every key decision point in Minnesota's juvenile justice system: arrests, referral to juvenile court, detention, petition, probation, confinement and adult certification.

- Minnesota is among eight states with the greatest inequities between White youth and youth of color in the juvenile justice system (5:1 ratio or higher).
- Black youth are five times more likely to be detained for the same offense when arrested than White youth, Native youth four times as likely and Latino youth twice as likely.
- Youth of color represent 38% of those detained in juvenile detention facilities and 46% of youth committed to a residential facility, yet the overall youth of color population ages 10-17 in Minnesota is currently only 18% of total youth population.

Minnesota Can Create a Fair Juvenile Justice System for All Our Children.

When we create a system that considers the unique characteristics and needs of children and adolescents, engages the community in providing alternative services, and treats all children fairly regardless of race and ethnic background, we can give every Minnesota child the opportunity necessary for success.

Questions for Candidates: If elected, how will you address the racial inequities in the Minnesota juvenile justice system? What is your priority in addressing juvenile justice issues?

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