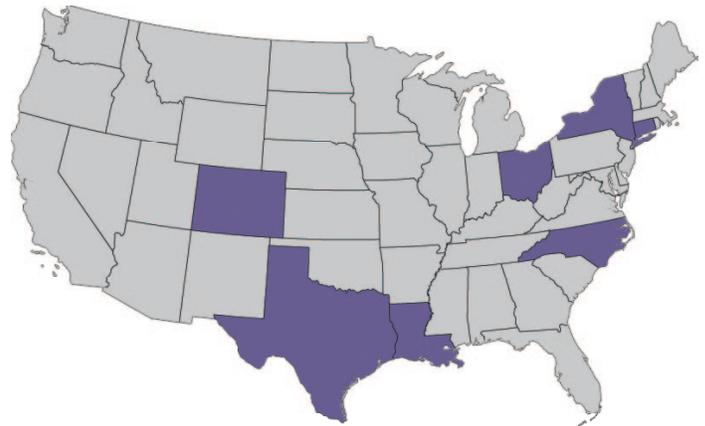


The National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems

Report on the 2011 States

Building on the work of local, state and national juvenile justice reform advocates, the *National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems* seeks to accelerate the pace of reforms throughout the country. In 2011, the Campaign supported efforts to improve outcomes for youth and families in contact with the justice system that would also save taxpayers money, improve public safety, and lower recidivism. In 2011, the Campaign promoted policies designed to:

- Keep youth out of the criminal and juvenile justice system;
- Change the way youth are treated to reflect their developmental differences from adults; and
- Increase availability and access to effective alternatives to juvenile incarceration.



State policy change in 2011

By assessing the needs and opportunities for reforms in each state, seasoned policy professionals worked in partnership with state advocates and reform-minded policymakers to achieve

significant policy change. The 2011 Campaign contributed to policy changes in New York, Ohio and Texas, helped secure funds for a Raise The Age law in Connecticut, and laid the groundwork for future reform in Colorado, Louisiana and North Carolina.

Ohio

There was wide-spread agreement among justices of the Ohio Supreme Court, legislative leaders, the executive branch, and local and county juvenile justice officials that Ohio needed to cut the number of young people incarcerated in state facilities and reduce the flow of youth into the system.

“This is a great story. Fewer kids in our institutions. More in community settings. What we know is if we can successfully apply community treatment, we have much better outcomes than when we lock people up and throw away the key. And that is what we are all searching for.” — *Ohio Gov. John Kasich, June 29th, 2011, bill signing statement on HB 86.*

Ohio Outcomes

HB 86 and HB 153 were signed into law in 2011, including a package of reforms to:

- Invest funds from facility closures into local services;
- Extend juvenile court authority to permit judicial release throughout a youth’s term of commitment;
- Revise mandatory sentencing to allow young people to return to the juvenile court;
- Adopt uniform competency standards and enhance research-informed practices.

New York

Prior to taking office, Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo toured a fully staffed juvenile detention facility that was operating without residents. He vowed to end government waste and close empty and underutilized facilities. The Governor’s budget provided for the closure of such facilities, expanded community-based alternative treatment, and called for youth to be served close to home.

New York Outcomes

The legislature and governor agreed on a set of major policy reforms that were adopted in the 2012 New York State budget to:

- Close under-used facilities and reduce beds;
- Increase the amount of funding for alternatives to detention;
- Incentivize localities to create alternatives to incarceration;
- Decrease use of secure detention facilities, and;
- Maintain programs that support positive youth development.

“The budget reforms to the state’s juvenile justice system encourage greater use of community-based alternatives, while downsizing the state juvenile facilities system.... While continuing to ensure that core services are available for needy populations, the budget recalibrates spending in all areas of social services including housing, youth delinquency prevention and other services.” — *Governor’s Press Office, Press Release, Governor Cuomo Announces On-Time Passage of Historic, Transformational 2011-12 New York State Budget, March 31st, 2011.*

Texas

Amidst a deepening state budget crisis, legislators and advocates sought to find ways to save money and improve operations in the juvenile justice system. To accomplish these goals, Governor Perry and the legislature supported the merger of two agencies, the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) that deal with delinquent youth. Texas also changed school discipline practices.

Texas Outcomes

A transition team is now charged with facilitating the merger of the two agencies following legislative guidelines to:

- Prioritize alternatives to incarceration that focus on community- and/or family-based programs;
- Encourage policies that produce positive outcomes for youth, their families and their communities;
- Promote the use of programs and services proven to be most effective; and
- Protect and enhance cooperation between state and local governments.

“The bill, signed last week by Gov. Rick Perry, combines the TYC with the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and tasks the new Texas Juvenile Justice Commission with maximizing community-based programs. The legislation also closes three of 10 youth prisons, and shifts state money to local rehabilitation programs. ‘It got so much support because it makes so damn much sense. We let the money follow the kids. It worked better than anyone’s imagination, said Senator John Whitmire, (D) Houston’” — *The Houston Chronicle, Left and Right Embrace the Policy of Rehabilitation Over Incarceration, May 21st, 2011.*

Connecticut

In 2007, Connecticut approved legislation to Raise the Age of adulthood from 16-years-old to 18-years-old for criminal prosecution through a two-step process: to 17 in 2010, and to 18 in 2011. Amidst a deepening fiscal crisis, with the Campaign’s help advocates successfully mobilized to obtain \$23 million to support the increase to 18 years of age.

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