
THE MONITOR – JUVENILE JUSTICE SUCCESSES

The State of Illinois has made considerable progress this year in improving the laws and policies that affect youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) into the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS).

In a very significant reorganization, and with authority granted by PA 96 1022, the Governor has moved DJJ into DCFS. The bill removes the requirement that DJJ share administrative services with the Dept. of Corrections. The intent is to help provide a culture of helping and treating youth who have been confined under the authority of DJJ. Also DJJ has a new leader, Director Bishop, who comes from the tradition of child services, rather than corrections. The expectation is that with the DJJ under the DCFS umbrella, the move of DJJ to a more treatment, education and rehabilitation of children system will materialize more quickly.

New Illinois Statutes Enacted This Year.

Raising the Juvenile Court Age. PA 96-1199 asks the Juvenile Justice Commission to conduct a study of raising the age of jurisdiction to 18 for felony offenses and report by Dec. 31, 2011. (Presently only misdemeanors remain in juvenile court to age 18.)

Sexting. PA 96-1087 provides a minor who distributes indecent visual depictions of another minor may be subject to a petition for adjudication and adjudges a minor in need of supervision (and ordered to have counseling or other services or perform community services). Previously this was a felony.

Department of Juvenile Justice.

PA 96-1251 creates the DJJ Mortality Review Team to review deaths of youth in DJJ custody.

PA 96-1378 enables the move of DJJ to DCFS, and encourages collaboration with “child-serving agencies.”

Juvenile Parole Reform PA 96-1271 Provides that the Juvenile Justice Commission shall develop recommendations regarding due process protections during release decision-making processes, including parole and parole revocation proceedings. Clarifies that the Prisoner Review Board has options for juvenile parolees.

Federal Issues.

The Illinois House passed HR 1143 which urges the US Senate to ratify the **Convention on the rights of the Child**. The National and Illinois PTA have long supported this international agreement, which has been ratified by almost all the countries of the world.

The US Supreme Court, in May of 2010 ruled that teenagers may not be locked up for **life without chance of parole** if they have not killed anyone. It ruled that young people serving life sentences must at least be considered for release.

Resources Available on the Subject of Juveniles.

Juvenile Justice Initiative www.jjustice.org

“Ten Years of Progress.” Illinois PTA report www.illinoispta.org click on Take Action, then Juvenile Justice Initiative, and then Ten years-----.

“The Real Costs and Benefits of Change” www.NJJN.org.

Illinois Models for Change. www.modelsforchange.net. Click on Publications and then “Report of the Behavioral Health program for Youth Committed to Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice”

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