

CAMPAIGN FOR
YOUTH JUSTICE

BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

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Ten Years and Waiting: A Decade Since the Passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act

Please Urge Your State to Comply with the Prison Rape Elimination Act – The Safety of our Youth Depends on it

WASHINGTON (July 23, 2013) -- This week marks the 10 year anniversary of the U.S. Congresses passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) , a federal statute focused on sexual assault and victimization in juvenile facilities, prisons, jail, lockups, and other detention facilities. The goal of PREA is to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse in detention and correctional facilities.

However, it is not time to celebrate.

Young people involved in the criminal justice system still sit and wait in harm's way for the passage of this law to take effect, as we have hit this 10-year milestone. By this September, Governors must begin auditing detention and correctional facilities to ensure full compliance with PREA or risk losing a percentage of federal funding allocated for justice programs in their state.

Regulations approved by the U.S. Department of Justice state that "as a matter of policy, the Department support(s) strong limitations on the confinement of adults with juveniles."

Compliance with the Youthful Inmate Standard of the law calls on states to limit contact between youth and adults in adult facilities by banning the housing of youth in the general adult population, prohibiting contact between youth and adults in common areas, and ensuring youth are constantly supervised by staff. States must also limit the use of isolation which causes or exacerbates mental health problems for youth.

"The PREA standards will protect hundreds of thousands of kids prosecuted in the adult system every year, and get us one step closer to completely removing youth from adult jails and prisons" said President and CEO of the Campaign for Youth Justice, Liz Ryan. "We hope that as states implement these important standards they use this opportunity to reconsider the practice of trying youth as adults overall."

Research shows that youth are not safe in adult jails and prisons and are at the greatest risk of sexual victimization. According to research by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, youth under the age of 18 represented 21 percent of all substantiated victims of inmate-on-inmate sexual violence in jails in 2005, and 13 percent in 2006 – surprisingly high since only one percent of jail inmates are juveniles. The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission found that “more than any other group of incarcerated persons, youth incarcerated with adults are probably at the highest risk for sexual abuse.” Research also shows that youth are 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult jail than in a juvenile detention facility.

Stakeholders from across the country have weighed in to support the full implementation of PREA, including removing children from adult jails and prisons. All of the major national stakeholder associations that deal with juvenile or adult detention or corrections, including the American Correctional Association, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, National Juvenile Detention Association, and the American Jail Association have policies that strongly back this recommendation.

And, the public agrees. Public opinion polling shows that a majority of Americans reject placement of youth in adult jails and prisons and strongly favors rehabilitation and treatment approaches, such as counseling, education, treatment, restitution, and community service.

Youth must be removed from adult jails and prisons to fully comply with PREA and protect youth from sexual assault. The stakes are too high for noncompliance.

It is crucial that governors fully protect children from the dangers of adult jails and prisons. Rather than try to segregate children from adults in adult jails and prisons which often leads to solitary confinement, governors should implement best practices by removing youth from adult jails and prisons.

Please additional information, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/c5ycxk5>.

Join the conversation on #ImplementPREA. Follow CFYJ on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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The Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ) is a national organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing and incarcerating youth under the age of 18 in the adult criminal justice system. For more background on this issue, please visit www.campaignforyouthjustice.org.