



BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

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**New Report Shows Nearly Half of States Moving Away
from Prosecuting, Detaining, and Sentencing Youth in the Adult
Criminal Justice System**

*Florida, New York, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and District of Columbia Lag Behind in Reform
Efforts to Remove Children from the Adult Criminal Justice System*

WASHINGTON, DC (OCTOBER 10, 2013) – The Campaign for Youth Justice (CFYJ), a national advocacy organization dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth under 18 in the adult criminal justice system, released a new report today, [*State Trends - Legislative Victories from 2011-2013: Removing Youth from the Adult Criminal Justice System*](#). The report takes a look at states that have, and are taking steps to remove children from the adult criminal justice system.

This report arrives at a moment when there is a real opportunity for reform. States are recognizing that youth have developmental differences from adults as well as great potential for rehabilitation, both of which should be taken into account in sentencing,” said Jessica Sandoval, CFYJ’s Vice President.

Over the past eight years, twenty three states have enacted forty pieces of legislation to reduce the prosecution of youth in adult criminal courts and end the placement of youth in adult jails and prisons. The report documents the continuation of four trends in justice reform efforts across the country and highlights the key pieces of legislation enacted between 2011 and 2013.

- **Trend 1:** Eleven states (Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Nevada, Hawaii, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, Oregon and Ohio) have passed laws limiting states’ authority to house youth in adult jails and prisons.
- **Trend 2:** Four states (Connecticut, Illinois, Mississippi, and Massachusetts) have expanded their juvenile court jurisdiction so that older youth who previously would be automatically tried as adults are not prosecuted in adult criminal court.

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- **Trend 3:** Twelve states (Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Nevada, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Ohio, Maryland and Nevada) have changed their transfer laws making it more likely that youth will stay in the juvenile justice system.
- **Trend 4:** Eight states (California, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Texas, Missouri, Ohio, and Washington) have changed their mandatory minimum sentencing laws to take into account the developmental differences between youth and adults, allow for post-sentence review for youth facing juvenile life without parole or other sentencing reform for youth sentenced as adults.

“We are seeing state policy makers making change based on solid research and public opinion. The research shows that past policies didn’t work to increase public safety or reduce juvenile crime,” said Carmen Daugherty, Policy Director for CFYJ. “We now have more evidence on what does work to reduce juvenile crime, which is rehabilitation and treatment over incarceration. Public opinion strongly favors rehabilitation and treatment over incarceration and judicial review over automatic prosecution in adult court.”

In a sweeping effort to crack down on youth crime in the 1980’s and 1990’s, many states enacted harsh laws making it easier for youth to be prosecuted in adult criminal courts. According to the report there are still too many children in the adult criminal justice system, an estimated 250,000 in adult court every year, and nearly 100,000 youth placed in adult jails and prisons each year. Half the states have not yet undertaken reforms at all. These states include Florida, New York, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia.

[The full report can be found here.](#)

For additional questions regarding [State Trends - Legislative Victories from 2011-2013: Removing Youth from the Adult Criminal Justice System](#), contact Aprill Turner at (202) 558-3580 or aturner@cfyj.org. For more on CFYJ’s research, please visit our website at www.cfyj.org.

The Campaign for Youth Justice, based in Washington, DC, is dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth under 18 in the adult criminal justice system.

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