



BECAUSE THE CONSEQUENCES AREN'T MINOR

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Campaign for Youth Justice Applauds Senators Paul and Booker for Introduction of REDEEM Act

Proposed legislation incentivizes states to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 18-years-old

WASHINGTON, DC (July 8, 2014) -- Today, Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) introduced the REDEEM Act (The Record Expungement Designed to Enhance Employment Act) which attempts to reform our current criminal justice systems-including how states handle youth in the adult system.

Recognizing the many barriers to successful reentry and the collateral consequences of an adult conviction, the REDEEM Act:

- Incentivizes states to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 18-years-old: Currently 10 states (Louisiana, New York, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Georgia, South Carolina, Michigan, Missouri, and Texas) have set the original jurisdiction of adult criminal courts below 18-years-old. This sends countless kids into the unforgiving adult criminal system. The REDEEM Act incentivizes states to change that by offering preference to Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant applications for those that have set 18 or older as the age of original jurisdiction for adult criminal courts.
- Offers adults way to seal non-violent criminal records: Presents the first broad-based federal path to the sealing of criminal records for adults. Non-violent offenders will be able to petition a court and make their case. Furthermore, employers requesting FBI background checks will get only relevant and accurate information - thereby protecting job applicants - because of provisions to improve the background check system.
- Allows for sealing and expungement of juvenile records: Provides for automatic expungement of records for kids who commit non-violent crimes before they turn 15 and automatic sealing of records for those who commit non-violent crimes after they turn 15 years old.
- Restricts use of juvenile solitary confinement: Ends the cruel and counterproductive practice of solitary confinement except in the most extreme circumstances in which it is necessary to protect a juvenile detainee or those around them.

- Lifts ban on SNAP and TANF benefits for low-level drug offenders: The REDEEM Act restores access to benefits for those who have served their time for use, possession, and distribution crimes provided their offense was rationally related to a substance abuse disorder and they have enrolled in a treatment program.

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“The few states that continue to automatically treat all 16 and 17 year olds as adults are behind national trends,” states Campaign for Youth Justice CEO Marcy Mistrett. "It is refreshing and encouraging to see bipartisan leadership in the Senate to help states do the right thing by kids who come in contact with the justice system. This bill moves in the right direction when it comes to recognizing what many state policy makers, scientists, and even the Supreme Court have recognized, kids are different than adults."

About The Campaign for Youth Justice:

CFYJ is dedicated to ending the practice of trying, sentencing, and incarcerating youth under 18 in the adult criminal justice system. The Campaign works in partnership with state-based campaigns in a number of states. We serve as a clearinghouse of information on youth prosecuted as adults and make our tools and resources available to those interested in learning and taking action on an issue that personally affects them. For additional information , visit www.cfyj.org.

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