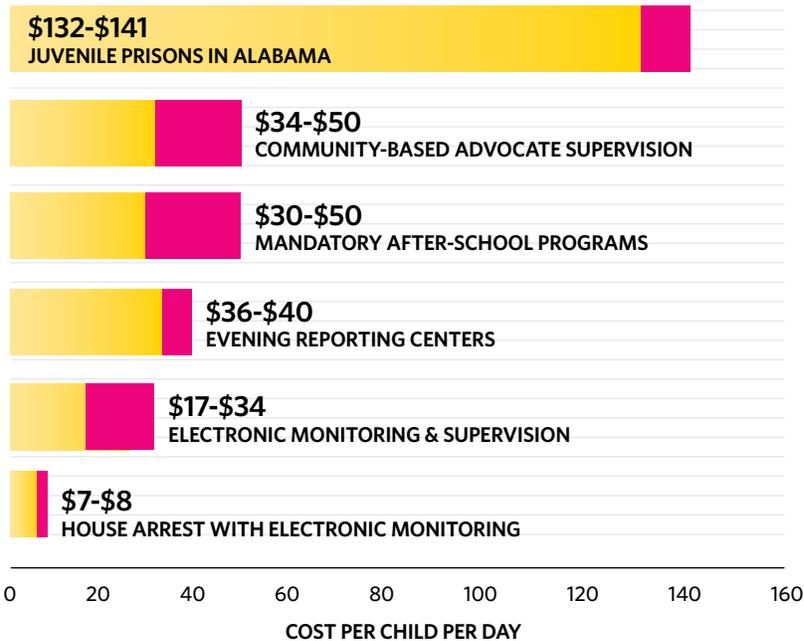


Juvenile Prisons: Paying More for Less Safety

According to national studies, most juvenile prisons have recidivism rates of 50%-70%. In contrast, studies have shown that community-based sanctions can reduce juvenile recidivism by up to 80%. Warehousing youth in juvenile prisons is not only the least effective means of turning troubled children into responsible adults — **it is also the most expensive.**



For more information, contact the Alabama Youth Justice Coalition.

Alabama taxpayers are spending more than \$30,000,000 per year to put children behind bars. By redirecting funds from juvenile prisons to community-based sanctions, states like Mississippi and Texas have saved millions in taxpayer dollars and helped their children succeed — **without sacrificing public safety.**

Working together, we can ensure that Alabama's juvenile justice system is accountable to the families it serves and the taxpayers it protects.

Juvenile Prisons: Paying More for Less Safety

REFERENCES:

James Austin et al., “Alternatives to the Secure Detention & Confinement of Juvenile Offenders” at 2-3, in U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (Sept. 2005) (“Research on traditional confinement in large training schools . . . has found high recidivism rates. As many as 50–70 percent of previously confined youth are rearrested within 1 or 2 years after release.”).

Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, *Less Cost, More Safety: Guiding Lights for Reform in Juvenile Justice* at 21 (2001) (reviewing “research-proven program strategies to reduce delinquency,” including programs that have “reduced the recidivism rates of delinquent youth by 25 to 80 percent in repeated trials dating back to 1972”).

National Institutes of Health, *State-of-the-Science Conference Statement: Preventing Violence and Related Health-Risking Social Behaviors in Adolescents* at 13 (Oct. 2004) (noting that the incarceration of juvenile offenders raises “the hazard of ‘contagion’” because “[w]hen young people with delinquent proclivities are brought together, the more sophisticated can instruct the more naïve in precisely the behaviors that the inter- venter wishes to prevent”).

Alabama spends more than \$30,000,000 per year in taxpayer dollars to put children behind bars. The state’s three largest juvenile prisons (Chalkville, Mt. Meigs, and Vacca) cost \$25,884,902 per year – 502 beds at \$141.27 per day. American Correctional Ass’n, *2006 Directory of Adult & Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, & Probation & Parole Authorities* at 65. The second largest prisons (operated by Three Springs under contract with DYS) cost \$4,760,512.50 per year – 49 beds in Madison at \$132.50 per day and an additional 50 beds in Tuskegee at \$131 per day. Dept. of Youth Services, *Placement Contract Information for FY 2006*.

Paul DeMuro, *Consider the Alternatives: Planning and Implementing Detention Alternatives* at 24 (2000), in Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Pathways to Detention Reform*. To account for six years of inflation since 2000, the figures set forth by DeMuro have been adjusted upward by 1.134. See the inflation chart published by Capital Professional Services at http://inflationdata.com/inflation/Inflation_Rate/HistoricalInflation.aspx.

Mississippi Department of Human Services, *Division of Youth Services, Annual Report* at 50 (2005).

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