MISSISSIPPI

JUVENILE

JUSTICE

REFORM

BRIEFING BOOK
MISSISSIPPI COALITION FOR THE PREVENTION OF SCHOOLHOUSE TO JAILHOUSE is a state-wide group of educators, community, legal and public policy groups dedicated to using cost-effective and humane strategies to close Mississippi’s schoolhouse to jailhouse pipeline and reform its wasteful, ineffective juvenile justice system.
Mississippi’s juvenile justice system relies almost exclusively on incarceration — the most expensive, least effective means of combating juvenile delinquency.¹ Your Mississippi taxpayer dollars support the Oakley and Columbia training schools — $115 per day for each incarcerated child.² And what are Mississippians paying for? The ongoing abuse and neglect in these institutions has been documented by the federal government, independent consultants, and the State itself.

But there is another way. Community-based sanctions cost the state only $23.08 per child per day—and these programs are proven more effective at rehabilitating troubled youth.³ The training schools simply don’t work. Children there receive ineffective rehabilitative services; many find it impossible to escape old behaviors and end up cycling in and out of the system.¹ And once Mississippi resolves the lawsuits pending over conditions at the training schools, the cost of incarceration may rise to $260.00 per child per day.⁴

**Given our budget crisis, we cannot afford to pump more money into a broken system. The time for true, cost effective juvenile justice reform is now.**
Meaningful, systemic reform will require the Mississippi legislature to:

1) **End reliance on the paramilitary training schools.**
We can save taxpayers millions of dollars by eventually and safely phasing out one of the state-supported paramilitary training schools.

2) **Invest in community-based sanctions.**
The millions saved from phasing out a paramilitary training school should be used to create cost-efficient community-based sanctions proven to rehabilitate troubled youth.

3) **Create the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission.**
The state agencies charged with providing services to at-risk youth should coordinate their services with youth courts, school districts, families and communities through a single Commission.

4) **Protect the rights of court-involved youth.**
The youth court process must be fair and uniform statewide. Detention facilities should comply with national standards and the recommendations of the Mississippi Juvenile Detention Task Force. An “Office of Juvenile Advocacy and Representation” should ensure youth are adequately represented in youth court proceedings.
Why reform? Why now?

**Reform makes good financial sense.** Juvenile justice reform will ensure financial accountability — starting now. At the moment, only 25 counties have access to community-based alternatives to the training schools. In FY 2004, these 25 programs saved the State of Mississippi over $14 million dollars. By expanding these programs to all 82 counties, we can multiply these savings — and better serve our children. **All we need to do is re-direct funds from wasteful programs to models with proven effectiveness.** Because effective models are also more cost-efficient, reform not only pays for itself, it leaves money to spare.

**Reform is grounded in research.** Many other states that have implemented juvenile justice reform plans have reduced juvenile crime. “Experience shows that states … can substantially reduce their reliance on incarceration — saving millions for taxpayers [and] increasing public safety.”

**Reform has strong public support.** Major media outlets, including the Clarion-Ledger, the Hattiesburg American, the Vicksburg Post, the Biloxi Sun Herald and the Jackson Free Press, have all endorsed our plan for juvenile justice reform.

Taxpayers and juvenile justice system stakeholders are counting on the legislature to implement juvenile justice reform this year and start reaping the benefits of wise investments.
Constant negative press. Multiple federal lawsuits. Continuing allegations of abuse. And millions of taxpayer dollars. Mississippi has one of the worst — and most wasteful — juvenile justice systems in the country.
What is Happening to Our Children?

Mississippi’s juvenile justice system is among the worst in the nation. The U.S. Department of Justice issued a report detailing horrific abuses: children were beaten, shackled, tied to poles, and hogtied. Suicidal girls were stripped naked and locked in dark, solitary cells without ventilation or toilets. Other children were forced to exercise while staff members sprayed mace into the air. Mississippi also failed to provide for our children’s medical, mental health, and educational needs.

The State of Mississippi has documented the abuse and neglect our children suffer at Oakley and Columbia. A year before the Department of Justice’s report, the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER Committee) found that the training schools neglected our children’s medical needs. Most disturbingly, the PEER Committee found that Oakley and Columbia lacked “the policies, procedures and practices to prevent the … abuse of juveniles.”

An independent audit commissioned by the Mississippi Department of Education confirmed the State’s failure to care for children in the training schools. In an audit released in January 2004, JBHM Education Group concluded:

• A culture of low behavior and academic expectations has developed over the years and is serving to perpetuate an academic program that provides little benefit to the children that are served.

• The principal mission, and one that is commonly held among staff, is clearly one of punishment — education
“This is not a place for kids. I’ve seen staff break a kid’s nose. I’ve seen staff mace kids for fun. They don’t take care of us here.”

E.O., Oakley cadet, age 15

is secondary to the mission.\textsuperscript{15}

Over-reliance on programs proven ineffective at reducing juvenile crime. Large training schools have never proved effective at steering youthful offenders away from crime. Study after study proves that recidivism from large training schools like Oakley and Columbia is uniformly high.\textsuperscript{16}

Too few options for youth court judges. In their 2004 testimony to the Mississippi legislature, youth court judges pleaded for more alternatives to the training schools.\textsuperscript{17} Without community-based sanctions, judges are forced to choose between probation and incarceration, which often leaves non-violent youth with serious emotional disturbances or substance abuse problems behind bars.\textsuperscript{18} These children could be treated in their communities for less than one-fourth the cost of incarceration.

Lack of uniformity and fairness in youth courts and detention centers. The cards are stacked against children who end up in youth court. Prosecutors get more funding and better training than public defenders;\textsuperscript{19} court procedures vary wildly from county to county. The absence of a uniform set of standards in local detention centers leaves our children vulnerable to unconscionable abuse and neglect.\textsuperscript{20}

Failing our children, failing our taxpayers. Mississippi taxpayers spend $115 per child, per day to incarcerate children.\textsuperscript{21} Even with so much taxpayer money in their budgets, the training schools fail to rehabilitate or educate the children entrusted to their care.\textsuperscript{22} Due to the rampant abuse and violent conditions, the training schools do more harm than good.
“These are all our children. We will all profit by, or pay for, whatever they become.”

James Baldwin

Youth-court involved children: Who are they?

**Overwhelmingly non-violent.** Mississippi law ensures that serious offenders over the age of twelve are tried as adults and serve adult time.\(^{23}\) Children often find themselves in youth court — and in the training schools — for offenses like truancy and disruptive classroom behavior.\(^{24}\)

**Can succeed in community-based programs.** Experts agree that more community-based programs reduce juvenile crime.\(^{25}\) Without these programs, youth who pose no threat to public safety may end up behind bars, costing taxpayers at least $115 per day.

**Desperate for mental health services.** A study commissioned by the State of Mississippi found that up to 85% of youth in training school or juvenile detention live with some form of mental illness.\(^{26}\)

**Disproportionately African-American.** Approximately 80% of the children locked up in Mississippi are African-American.\(^{27}\) Yet African Americans comprise only 36% of Mississippi’s overall population.\(^{28}\)

**Failed by the State of Mississippi.** Mississippi law requires that every effort be made to avoid putting children behind bars.\(^{29}\) When we incarcerate a non-violent child, we are admitting the State’s failure to adequately invest in the child’s community.
Our future, and our most precious resource. We cannot give up on youth who have lost their way. If we invest our resources in community-based programs proven effective at combating juvenile delinquency, we can ensure that Mississippi’s children achieve their full potential and become productive members of society. If we continue to invest in incarceration, we will be preparing our children for nothing but Parchman Penitentiary.
The Department of Justice Investigation

The following excerpts were taken from the Department of Justice investigation of the Mississippi juvenile justice system:

[T]o manage youth, [Oakley and Columbia] rely on discipline and force. This leads to unconstitutionally abusive disciplinary practices such as hog-tying, pole-shackling, improper use and overuse of restraints and isolation, staff assaulting youth and OC spray [mace] abuse.

[B]oys and girls consistently described the practice [of hog-tying], where youth are placed face down on the floor with their hands and feet shackled and drawn together.

[O]ne young girl reported that her arms and legs were handcuffed and shackled around a utility pole because she was non-compliant during military exercises.

Girls … at Columbia are punished for acting out or being suicidal by being placed in a cell called the ‘dark room.’ The ‘dark room’ is a locked, windowless isolation cell with lighting controlled by staff. … [W]hen the room is in use, the room is completely dark.

The cells are extremely hot with inadequate ventilation. Some girls were naked in a dark room where they must urinate and defecate in a hole that they cannot flush.

These exercises and disciplinary practices serve no penological or rehabilitative purpose. Many are cruel and demeaning. They are also unsafe because … when this type of physical punishment is imposed the facility does not monitor the physical well-being of the youth.
The Training Schools Are Lightning Rods For Lawsuits

In the past year alone, Mississippi has been forced to defend itself against three federal lawsuits over conditions at Oakley and Columbia Training Schools.

_Morgan v. Sproat_: A class action on behalf of abused and neglected children at Oakley that led to a lengthy order commanding the State to comply with federal and state law. In his 2003 testimony to the Joint Legislative Committee, then-Attorney General Mike Moore admitted that the State had been violating the Morgan court’s orders for decades.32

_United States v. Mississippi_: A lawsuit by the U.S. Department of Justice over the inhumane and unconstitutional conditions at both training schools.

_K.L.W. v. James_: A recent class action on behalf of children at Columbia. K.L.W is a fourteen-year-old child with special needs who was choked by a Columbia staff member, kept in solitary confinement for several days, and denied access to the courts.

The Mississippi Legislature has the power to resolve all pending lawsuits and safeguard the State against further litigation by enacting comprehensive juvenile justice reform this session.

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The Louisiana Legislature saved over $18 million in taxpayer money by removing juveniles from the State’s most troubled facility.

The Mississippi Legislature Can Resolve All Training School Lawsuits

In the wake of litigation over conditions at its juvenile facilities — including a Department of Justice lawsuit — the Louisiana Legislature saved over $18 million in taxpayer money by removing juveniles from the State’s most troubled facility. Some of these savings were invested in community-based sanctions.

The Mississippi Legislature can and should reap similar benefits for our taxpayers. Mississippi now spends $115 per youth per day in its training schools. The cost is far higher in other states. According to the American Correctional Association, the national average is $183.06 per youth per day. Without that kind of spending, it is impossible to meet minimum legal standards and avoid litigation.

But investing in community-based sanctions — which cost as little as $23.04 per youth per day — will save taxpayer money, better serve our children and help protect Mississippi from litigation over conditions at juvenile facilities.
“While I was at Columbia, the military program was tearing down my pride and building up my anger.”

J.W., former Columbia cadet, age 14

“The only thing I learned at Oakley was how to fight harder.”

A.H., former Oakley cadet, age 18

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**Paramilitary Training Schools Don’t Work**

Virtually every study examining recidivism among youth sentenced to juvenile training schools in the past three decades has found that at least 50 to 70 percent of offenders are arrested within one or two years after release. Clearly, training schools are not derailing the criminal careers of youthful offenders.

A century of experience with training schools and youth prisons demonstrates that they constitute the one extensively evaluated and clearly ineffective method to treat delinquents.

The most current research confirms these grim findings. In October 2004, a panel of independent experts convened by the National Institute of Health, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Justice again concluded that group detention centers, boot camps, and other “get tough” programs that rely on scare tactics only encourage youth to teach each other negative behaviors.

By contrast, research shows that family services and community-based sanctions are tremendously successful in reducing juvenile delinquency. The most effective strategies “work with young people in their own homes and communities, rather than in institutions, and they focus heavily on the family environment.” In trial after trial, family-oriented interventions have reduced recidivism by 25 to 80 percent. We can obtain these results for our children at only a fraction of the price of incarceration.
community-based alternatives in 25 counties saved the state more than $14 million in 2004.

Expanding these programs to make them available in all 82 counties could triple those savings.

Community-Based Sanctions

Sensible juvenile justice reform means redirecting resources from expensive and wasteful prisons toward more cost-effective sanctions. The professionals who operate community-based programs ensure public safety by closely monitoring youth while helping them learn to avoid delinquent behavior. In other states, programs like those listed below have saved taxpayers millions of dollars each year while also lowering juvenile crime rates.  

Day Treatment: Year round alternative education, counseling, and life skills. Students attend classes for up to 6 hours each day and are involved in counseling and various community service activities before returning to their own homes. Some programming may be offered on weekends and evenings.

Job Readiness / Work Experience Program: Provides a variety of experiences in the non-profit sector. The program is often part of a state-wide interdepartmental agreement.

Home Detention: Staff provides intensive monitoring by making frequent, random, and sometimes unannounced home visits to ensure that youth stay out of trouble. Youth have a curfew and are required to phone staff regularly. Home detention is often combined with family counseling and case management.

Family Therapy: Counseling services for the entire family unit to reduce risk factors and help children recognize and avoid delinquent behavior.

Case Management / Tracking: A treatment assessment and planning program where case managers coordinate educational and vocational programs for at-risk youth. Each
youth is assigned a “tracker” (usually a college student) who monitors the youth’s behavior and activities and acts as a mentor.

Other community-based sanctions include: community service, anger management, structured after-school programming, alternative schools, therapeutic classrooms, and substance abuse treatment.44

The Missouri Model
The Missouri system provides a highly effective and cost-efficient model for youth who require residential placement.

After a 1969 federal report condemned one of Missouri’s large training schools for its “quasi-penal-military” atmosphere, Missouri began to replace its large institutions with a network of small, regional facilities. Hallmarks of this program are highly trained staff; high quality educational programming; a 24-hour per day group and individual therapy regimen; and intensive family outreach made possible by the regional model. Missouri has a recidivism rate of 8%, while the national recidivism rate for training schools ranges from 50%-70%.

According to Mark Steward, the Director of Missouri’s system:

We put (children) in a safe and stable and supportive environment — some of them for the first time in their lives. We help them see opportunities and make choices about their futures … with us, they have an opportunity. Send them to a typical training school where staff intimidates them and they have to fight to survive, and they’ve got no shot.45

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![Rates of Recidivism](source_image)

**Rates of Recidivism**

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<th>PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION (%)</th>
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Endnotes


2 Shortly after this book was first published, DHS reported that the FY 2004 cost of incarceration in a Mississippi training school was $115 per youth per day. Emily Wagster Pettus, “Wide range of changes possible for training schools, officials say,” Sun Herald, Jan. 16, 2005 (relying on DHS materials distributed to senators and members of the press during a tour of Oakley on January 12, 2005). DHS officials had previously testified that the cost was $89 per youth per day. Mississippi Juvenile Justice: Hearing Before the Senate Judiciary B Comm. 175th Legis., 3d Extra. Sess. (Miss. Nov. 12, 2004) (testimony of DHS Executive Director Donald R. Taylor, DHS Deputy Administrator Richard Harris, and DYS Director Kathy H. Pittman).

3 Mississippi Juvenile Justice: Hearing Before the Senate Judiciary B Comm. 175th Legis., 3d Extra. Sess. (Miss. Nov. 12, 2004) (testimony of DHS Executive Director Donald R. Taylor, DHS Deputy Administrator Richard Harris, and DYS Director Kathy H. Pittman that the average cost of the Adolescent Offender Program is $23.08 per student per day); David M. Osher et al., “Deconstructing the pipeline: using efficacy, effectiveness and cost-benefit data to reduce minority youth incarceration,” in New Directions for Youth Development at 92 (Fall 2003) (“[R]esearch shows that there are alternatives to costly detention, such as intensive school- and community-based interventions, that are efficacious and cost-effective.”).

4 According to the testimony of DHS Executive Director Donald R. Taylor, DHS Deputy Administrator Richard Harris, and DYS Director Kathy H. Pittman before the Senate Judiciary B Committee in November 2004, at least 41% of youth at Oakley and Columbus have served multiple commitments. Mississippi Juvenile Justice: Hearing Before the Senate Judiciary B Comm. 175th Legis., 3d Extra. Sess. (Nov. 12, 2004). Experts from the University of Southern Mississippi’s Marriage and Family Therapy Program agreed that “[y]outh incarcerated in residential boot camps have higher recidivism rates than control groups.” Mississippi Juvenile Justice: Hearing Before the House Juvenile Justice Committee. 175th Legis., Req. Sess. (2004) (testimony of Dr. Mary Ann Adams, Mr. Jeff Hinton, Dr. Pat Sims).

5 After two years of litigation with the U.S. Department of Justice over training school conditions, Louisiana’s per youth per day costs have sky-rocketed. In the most recent appropriations bill, the Louisiana legislature appropriated a total of $52,418,470 for the operation of three Louisiana Training Institutes (“LTI”) in Fiscal Year 2004-2005. H.B. 1, § 08-403 (Office of Youth Development, Req. Sess. (La. 2004) (appropriating $19,517,642 for Swanson Correctional Center for Youth, $8,621,265 for Bridge City Correctional Center for Youth, and $24,279,563 for Jetson Correctional Center for Youth). In other words, Louisiana spends $143,612.24 per day to operate its three juvenile facilities. With approximately 450-950 youth in LTI custody at any given time, Louisiana now spends at least $260 and as much as $319 per youth per day on facilities like Mississippi’s training schools. See, e.g., Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Midnight Count Breakdown Secure Juvenile Facilities (December 2004) (showing total LTI population of 451 youth); Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Midnight Count Breakdown Secure Juvenile Facilities (July 2004) (showing total LTI population of 536 youth). The additional $200 per day that Louisiana spends on each child funds a variety of services required by federal law but not provided in Mississippi’s training schools.


13 Mississippi Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation & Expenditure Review, “Health and Safety Issues at the Oakley Training School” at vii, 9-12, 18-20 (May 14, 2002).


16 Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, Less Cost, More Safety: Guiding Lights for Reform in Juvenile Justice at 8-9 (2001); David M. Osher et al., “Deconstructing the pipeline: using efficacy, effectiveness and cost-benefit data to reduce minority youth incarceration,” in New Directions for Youth Development at 108 (Fall 2003) (“The Washington State Institute for Public Policy looked at the costs and benefits of juvenile boot camps and ‘scared straight’ programs and found that participants in these programs had higher recidivism rates than comparison groups.”).


19 Miriam Gohara & Sarah Geraghty, NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Assembly Line Justice: Mississippi's Indigent Defense Crisis at 14 (February 2003) (“While resources for the defense of adults are scarce, even fewer resources are devoted to the defense of juveniles. As a result, children in some youth courts are routinely ‘adjudicated delinquent’ without the benefit of anything resembling legal advocacy.”), available at http://www.naacpdlf.org/content/pdf/indigent/Assembly_ Line_Justice.pdf.

20 Clarence Powell, Chair, Mississippi’s Juvenile Detention Task Force, Recommendations at 2 (Dec. 11, 2002) (“[T]he provincial nature of juvenile detention
in Mississippi is of concern because it may lead to an inequity of services and care for juvenile detainees. ... Thus depending on where juveniles are detained, support services which provide for their physical, emotional and social development may or may not be appropriate.”); R. Gregory Dunway et al., Juvenile Detention Facilities Task Force, Legislative Brief at 3 (Dec. 2003) (recommending that the legislature (1) create a state agency to administer and enforce the uniform standards for juvenile detention centers, (2) establish sanctions for non-compliance with those standards, and (3) create a state advisory board to assist in administering the agency).

21 Emily Wagster Pettus, “Wide range of changes possible for training schools, officials say,” Sun Herald, Jan. 16, 2005 (“DHS statistics show that in fiscal 2004, which ended last June 30, the state spent an average of $151 per day for each student living at the training schools.”); Ronald Frazer, “Deral prison ‘gravy train’ to aid taxpayers,” Clarion-Ledger, Nov. 15, 2004 (“[T]axpayers are stuck with the cost of keeping 2 million men and women behind bars well into the future – not because justifiably needed, but because economic benefits of the prison business are working to keep it that way.”).

22 David M. Osher et al., “Deconstructing the pipeline: using efficacy, effectiveness and cost-benefit data to reduce minority youth incarceration,” in New Directions for Youth Development at 92 (Fall 2003) (“Cost benefit analyses suggest that the monetary benefits of effective prevention exceed the costs of such programs.”).


24 Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services, Annual Report at 10 (2003) (reporting that 3,798 children were referred to youth court for disorderly conduct in 2003; 2,113 were referred for “malicious mischief”); see also, e.g., Mississippi Division of Youth Services, Columbia Training School: Weekly Offense Report – By County (Nov. 12, 2004) (showing children committed to training school for “truancy,” “runaway,” “incorrigible,” “suspended,” and “curfew” violations); Mississippi Division of Youth Services, Columbia Training School: Weekly Offense Report – By County (Mar. 16, 2004) (showing children committed to training school for “larceny of a dog,” “uttering conduct,” “unovgernable,” “runaway”, and offensive language); Mississippi Division of Youth Services, Oakley Training School: Weekly Offense Report – By County (Mar. 16, 2004) (showing children committed to training school for “uttering conduct,” “truancy,” “disorderly conduct”, “incorrigible”, “breaking curfew”, “suspended fr. school”, “malicious mischief”, and “violating school rule”).

25 Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, Less Cost, More Safety: Guiding Lights for Reform in Juvenile Justice at 15 & 20 (2001) (“[N]on-residential treatment and/ or youth development services – aggressive intervention programs to resolve behavior problems in young people’s natural environment” are not only more effective in terms of rehabilitation, but also “cost far less than training schools.”). Dick Mendel, Small is Beautiful: The Missouri Division of Youth Services, 5 ADVOCASEY 29 (Spring 2003) (“Training school confinement is often justified as a necessary step to protect the public. Yet only 27% of incarcerated youth nationwide have been found guilty of a violent felony. Most have committed only property or drug crimes or disorderly conduct, sometimes only misdemeanors or ‘status offenses’ (like truancy or alcohol possession) that would not be crimes if committed by an adult.”).

26 Angela Robertson & Jonelle Husain, Mississippi State University, Prevalence of Mental Illness & Substance Abuse Disorders Among Incarcerated Juveniles at 2 & 27 (July 2001) (66% to 85% of incarcerated juveniles in Mississippi suffer from at least one diagnosable mental disorder, compared to only 14% to 20% of youth in the general population); see also Mississippi Juvenile Justice: Hearing before the House Juvenile Justice Committee, 175th Legis. Req. Sess. (March 2004) (testimony of Jane Boykin and Kate McMillan, Mississippi Forum on Children and Families, that abused and neglected children are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system).

27 Mississippi Division of Youth Services, Columbia Training School: Weekly Offense Report – By County (Nov. 12, 2004) (80% African-American); Mississippi Division of Youth Services, Columbia Training School: Weekly Offense Report – By County (Mar. 16, 2004) (78% African-American); Mississippi Division of Youth Services, Oakley Training School: Weekly Offense Report – By County (Mar. 16, 2004) (78% African-American); see also Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services, Annual Report at 6-7 (2003) (showing that 60% of children referred to youth court are African-American); David M. Osher et al., “Deconstructing the pipeline: using efficacy, effectiveness and cost-benefit data to reduce minority youth incarceration,” in New Directions for Youth Development at 91-92 (Fall 2003) (“[Y]outh of color . . . are disproportionately removed from family, school and community through a variety of unproven, ineffective, or harmful interventions.”).


29 Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-103 (mandating that “each child coming within the jurisdiction of the youth court shall become a responsible, accountable, and productive citizen, and that each such child shall receive such care, guidance and control, preferably in the child’s own home as is conducive toward that end and is in the state’s and the child's best interest.”) (emphasis added); Miss. Code Ann. § 43-21-605(g)(ii) (mandating preference for community-based treatment programs for delinquent youth).

30 Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, Less Cost, More Safety: Guiding Lights for Reform in Juvenile Justice at 9 (2001) (“[V]irtually every study examining recidivism among youth sentenced to juvenile training schools in the past three decades has found that at least 50 to 70 percent of offenders are arrested within one or two years after release.”); National Institutes of Health, State-of-the-Science Conference Statement: Preventing Violence and Related Health-Risking Social Behaviors in Adolescents at 13 (Oct. 13-15, 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 interveners wish to prevent.”); Ronald Frazer, “Deral prison ‘gravy train’ to aid taxpayers,” Clarion-Ledger, Nov. 15, 2004 (“[T]axpayers are stuck with the cost of keeping 2 million men and women behind bars well into the future – not because justice demands it, but because economic benefits of the prison business are working to keep it that way.”).


33 H.B. 1, § 08-403 (Office of Youth Development), Reg. Sess. (La. 2004) (appropriating a total of $52,418,470 – i.e., $143,612.24 per day – for the operation of three Louisiana Training Institutes (“LTI”) in Fiscal Year 2004-2005; Louisiana
Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Midnight Count Breakdown Secure Juvenile Facilities (December 2004) (showing total LTI population of 451 youth); Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, Midnight Count Breakdown Secure Juvenile Facilities (July 2004) (showing total LTI population of 536 youth).

34 Casey Strategic Consulting Group, Report to the Joint Legislative Juvenile Justice Commission: Reducing Juvenile Incarceration in Louisiana at 42 (Feb. 2003). Although Louisiana invested some of these savings in community-based sanctions, the State also continued to operate three large training schools. As a result of the DOJ litigation, the cost of those facilities has risen to more than $260 per youth per day. See supra, note 33.


38 National Institutes of Health, State-of-the-Science Conference Statement: Preventing Violence and Related Health-Risking Social Behaviors in Adolescents at 13 & 26 (Oct. 13-15, 2004); see also David M. Osher et al., “Deconstructing the pipeline: using efficacy, effectiveness and cost-benefit data to reduce minority youth incarceration,” in New Directions for Youth Development at 101 (Fall 2003) (“Congregating high-risk youth can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior. Foremost, youth with deviant behaviors tend to have deviant friends, who model and reinforce antisocial behavior.”).

39 Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn’t at 16 (2000) (“Intensive community-based supervision programs typically produce recidivism rates as low or lower than out-of-home placement (at a fraction of the cost), while intensive family-focused or multidimensional intervention programs have produced the lowest recidivism rates of all.”); Douglas W. Nelson, On Adolescent Crime: Time to End Fad Justice, in 5 ADVOCASEY 3 (Spring 2003) (“[M]any teens now locked in detention cells can be successfully supervised in the community for a fraction of the cost of confinement.”); David M. Osher et al., “Deconstructing the pipeline: using efficacy, effectiveness and cost-benefit data to reduce minority youth incarceration,” in New Directions for Youth Development at 92 (Fall 2003) (“[Research shows] that there are alternatives to costly detention, such as intensive school- and community-based interventions, that are efficacious and cost-effective.”).

40 Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, Less Cost, More Safety: Guiding Lights for Reform in Juvenile Justice at 21 (2001); see also id. at 22 (describing multisystemic therapy, in which “trained mental health counselors . . . work with troubled teens in their homes, engaging not just the young person but his or her whole family based on the understanding that most adolescent misbehavior can be traced back to the family system”); Jeffrey A. Butts & Paul Demuro, Center for the Study of Youth Policy, Population Profile and Risk Assessment Study: Mississippi Department of Youth Services at 25 (Feb. 1989) (“Mississippi is blessed with coastline and wilderness areas that would seem especially suited for two popular program models - the Associated Marine Institutes (AMI), and Outward Bound. Both programs have been proven effective in other states in dealing with the type of young offenders who would otherwise be placed in secure institutions.”).


42 Richard A. Mendel, American Youth Policy Forum, Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – And What Doesn’t at 17 (2000) (“For far less money, juvenile justice innovators have demonstrated that we can supervise these young offenders in the community, keep most of them crime-free, and reduce the likelihood that they will offend again in the future.”).


44 For a description of several research-based treatment programs proven to reduce juvenile delinquency, see Blueprints for Violence Prevention, a project initiated by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (“CSPV”) at the University of Colorado, now funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (“OJJDP”) at the U.S. Department of Justice. You can access the Blueprints on the web at http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html.

45 Dick Mendel, Small is Beautiful: The Missouri Division of Youth Services, 5 ADVOCASEY 38 (Spring 2003).
Mississippi Coalition
for the Prevention of Schoolhouse to Jailhouse

Action Communication and Education Reform
Activists With A Purpose
Advancement Project www.advancementproject.org
ACLU of Mississippi www.msaclu.org
Children’s Rights www.childrensrights.org
Citizens for Quality Education
Citizens for a Better Greenville
Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities www.mscoalition.com
Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County
Critical Resistance South www.criticalresistance.org
Hinds County Mental Health Commission
Indianola Parent Student Group
Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law www.lawyerscomm.org
Mississippi American Federation of Teachers www.maft.org
Mississippi Center for Justice www.mcenterforjustice.org
Mississippi Education Working Group http://southernecho.org/mewg/mewgbrochure.html
Mississippi Families as Allies for Children’s Mental Health, Inc.
Mississippi Human Services Coalition
Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance
Mississippi State Conference NAACP www.naacp.org/departments/education/education_index.html
Mississippi Workers’ Center for Human Rights www.msworkerscenter.org
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. www.naacpldf.org
Parents for Public Schools of Jefferson Davis County www.parents4publicschools.com/JeffDavisCounty
Parents United Together www.parentsunitedtogether.com
Public Policy Center of Mississippi www.mspublic.org
Second Chance
Southern Echo www.southernecho.org
Southern Juvenile Defender Center www.juveniledefender.org
Southern Poverty Law Center www.splcenter.org
Teens Helping Teens
Youth Innovation Movement www.onlinearc.com/mira/mira2/MS_8.htm?

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Checklist for Effective, Meaningful Juvenile Justice Reform

Juvenile Justice Reform should accomplish the following:

1. Cut funding for expensive, ineffective paramilitary programs.

2. Establish cost efficient, effective community based sanctions in every county.

3. Prevent the incarceration of non-violent and status offenders.

4. Ensure that youth who require residential placement are safely confined in facilities that use programs proven to reduce juvenile crime.

5. Require state agencies charged with providing services to at-risk youth to collaborate and coordinate their efforts.

6. Ensure that all children are adequately represented in youth court proceedings.

7. Unify Mississippi’s youth courts to standardize procedures across the state.

8. Require all detention centers to comply with national standards and the recommendations of the Mississippi Juvenile Detention Task Force.
“These are all our children. We will all profit by, or pay for, whatever they become.”

JAMES BALDWIN

Mississippi is currently paying the price of a failed juvenile justice system. Juvenile Justice Reform will allow us all to profit by investing in our greatest resource — our children.