

Youth Violence Prevention National Agenda

1. Amending the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP Act) of 1974 provides the major source of federal funding to improve states' juvenile justice systems. The original act allows for:

- the deinstitutionalization of status offenders and non-offenders (i.e. juveniles generally should not be held in adult jail)
- "sight and sound" separation between juvenile and adult offenders (i.e. if juveniles are put in an adult jail for an adult felony or if space isn't immediately available at a juvenile facility, they must be separated from adult inmates)
- a sharp limitation on the ability of the juvenile justice system to detain juveniles in adult facilities (i.e. juveniles should not be locked up for age-specific crimes, such as running away or possessing alcohol)
- protection of minority groups from being overrepresented in high-security facilities (i.e. states should not lock up minority youth at a higher rate than other kids)

Proposed changes to the 2009 reauthorization bill makes changes to the original bill in that it, among other things:

- requires rigorous new procedures before a state can detain a status offender, and strictly limits the time they may be detained;
- encourages states to move away from keeping young people in adult jails;
- prioritizes and funds mental health and drug treatment;
- emphasizes effective training of personnel who work with young people in the juvenile justice system;
- creates incentives for the use of programs that research and testing have shown to work best;
- **refocuses attention on prevention programs intended to keep children from ever entering the criminal justice system**
- **Insertion of the Blueprint's four goals and alignment of funding in prevention component**

2. Health and Human Service Funding Stream

Enhance public health's capacity and infrastructure at the federal, state, and local levels to address the ongoing public health crisis of violence.

- Establish an HHS funding stream or appropriations line item for youth violence to go to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the US Centers for Disease Prevention and Control
- Funding would go to support states and local public health departments in building infrastructure, capacity and systems to develop adequate data and surveillance systems and to support development of coordinated prevention planning, program implementation, and evaluation efforts in the most needed locales, including incentives and opportunities to participate in city-wide efforts.

3. Creation of White House Council on Youth Violence Prevention

The breadth of the federal government's involvement to address youth violence spans across multiple agencies and efforts. The creation of such a council will serve two functional purposes:

- Designation of youth violence prevention as a national priority
- Creation of a mechanism for effective policy coordination strategy for youth violence issues with State and local governments, tribes, schools, community groups, etc.
- Council core functions can be to serve as an information center, prepares reports, assists state/local communities draw on federal resources, coordinates a federal research agenda, and provide critical tools for families and communities working to reduce youth violence or address the aftermath.

4. Expansion of funding for Centers of Excellence on Violence Prevention

The CDC has established ten National Academic Centers of Excellence on youth violence to foster joint efforts between university researchers and communities to address the problem of youth violence. The Centers' primary objectives include the following:

- Partner with community agencies in developing and monitoring community-wide youth violence surveillance system
- Conduct risk and protective factor research in youth violence
- Conduct efficacy and effectiveness trials in the community
- Develop collaborations involving scholars and practitioners in areas ranging from and public health to criminology and the social sciences
- Provide training in violence prevention including the development and implementation of courses in the social sciences, public health, and medicine and pre doctoral and post doctoral training and mentoring opportunities
- Identify, engage, or partner with representatives from numerous, diverse local organizations to formulate community-based plans for violence prevention