



February 6, 2019

Re: Vote YES on H.R. 494, The Tiffany Joslyn Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2019

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition, we encourage you to vote “yes” on H.R. 494, the “Tiffany Joslyn Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2019.” The National Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition (NJJDPC) is a collaborative array of more than two hundred national and state youth- and family-serving, social justice, law enforcement, corrections, and faith-based organizations, working to ensure healthy families, build strong communities and improve public safety by promoting fair and effective policies, practices and programs for youth involved or at risk of becoming involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) expired in 2013 and has gone unfunded ever since.¹ The expiration of this block grant program has greatly limited states’ abilities to implement effective, age-appropriate accountability and prevention measures to ensure children receive needed services and that communities remain safe. As recently as Fiscal Year 2002, JABG was funded for \$250 million (more than \$350 million after adjusting for inflation). Though the new authorization is vastly smaller than the prior authorization, it still a critical investment for our states and deserves your support.

H.R. 494 updates the JABG to reflect current research and practices and incentivizes states to use graduated sanctions and incentives grounded in positive youth development, enhanced anti-bullying measures, gang prevention programs, and additional youth violence prevention and intervention services. It also updates the JABG to include evidence-based practices, such as trauma-informed practices and mental health care.

Federal support for juvenile justice programming has suffered greatly in the past decade, with funding decreasing by around 50% to the states.² Reauthorizing this important program, with

¹ ACT4JJ COALITION. JUVENILE JUSTICE FEDERAL FUNDING CHART, ACT 4 JJ COALITION, *available at* <http://www.act4jj.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/Historic%20Funding%20Chart%20-%20FY18.pdf>.

² *See id.* (noting that, in FY 2002, JABG was funded at \$249.5 million per year, and was last funded in FY 2014 at only \$25 million).

recommended funding levels of \$30 million annually for the next five years, would make a tremendous difference to youth, families, and communities.

We urge you to support reauthorization of this critical program and vote “yes” on H.R. 494.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
American Psychological Association
Boys Town
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for Children's Law and Policy
Center for Children's Law and Policy
Child Welfare League of America
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Forum for Youth Investment
Justice For Families
Justice Innovations
Justice Policy Institute
Learning Disabilities Association of America
NAACP
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
National Criminal Justice Association
National Criminal Justice Association
National Crittenton
National Juvenile Defender Center
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Network for Youth
National Partnership for Juvenile Services
National Youth Employment Coalition
President, Hope Matters
R Street Institute
SparkAction
Strategies for Youth, Inc.
The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth
The Sentencing Project
W. Haywood Burns Institute