



## Juvenile Justice Reform Legislation August 2009

---

**ISSUE:** S. 678, the “Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2009” (JJDP) was introduced in the Senate in late March by Judiciary Committee Chair, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), with Ranking Member, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and their colleagues, Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) and Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL). The introduction of a House companion measure is pending.

S. 678 is premised on research-based understandings of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. It advances important improvements to the JJDP, its core requirements and its central purposes, provides enhanced safeguards for youth in the system, increases community safety, and ensures progress toward racial fairness.

The legislation:

- Authorizes effective levels of funding for the core programs of the JJDP including the federal support needed to implement the core requirements of the statute and to leverage state investments in juvenile justice.
- Extends the adult Jail Removal and Sight and Sound Separation core requirements to apply to juveniles held pretrial, whether charged in juvenile or adult court.
- Confirms States’ flexibility to serve youth adjudicated in criminal court in juvenile facilities rather than adult prisons through extended juvenile jurisdiction.
- Strengthens the core requirement on Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) by expecting States to take data-driven steps to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system, and to evaluate and publicly report their progress.
- Encourages States to eliminate dangerous practices in confinement and to promote adoption of best practices and standards.
- Calls for evidence-based and promising approaches in mental health and substance use screening, assessment and treatment including diversion to home based and community based services, while also encouraging safe and effective treatment for youth in confinement, and supportive discharge planning and re-entry services.

The APA is supportive of S. 678 and appreciates its emphasis on evidence-based care for mental health and substance use screening and services for juveniles in contact with the Justice system.

---