

THE PARTNERSHIP

Promoting Quality Practices and Programs for Youth and Families that Result in Positive Change and Restore Community

National Partnership for Juvenile Services

PARTNERS

Council for Educators of At-Risk and Delinquent Youth

Juvenile Justice Trainers Association

National Association of Juvenile Correctional Agencies

National Juvenile Detention Association

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October 22, 2007

J. Robert Flores
Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, DC 20531

Re: **OJJDP Proposal Tracking Number 102193**
Application Titled *National Center for Juvenile Detention and Corrections*

Dear Bob,

I have never considered myself to be "politically correct" when dealing with matters that affect the lives of so many incarcerated juvenile offenders and those entrusted to provide supervision and guidance. Therefore, I will get right to the point.

The National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) was founded in 1968. It took twenty-three (23) years, or until 1991, for the NJDA leadership to make an imprint on the U. S. Department of Justice as it relates to the significant role that juvenile confinement has in the juvenile justice system. Many people, including elected officials, worked extremely hard to ensure that youth in our juvenile confinement facilities around the country have a voice and that the staff (the lowest paid and least appreciated employees in all the criminal justice system) would have an opportunity to develop on a professional level.

In 1991 NJDA, without relying on political lobbying and the ever-present strategy of getting an "earmark," secured its first funding award from OJJDP in the amount of \$100,000. The funding produced the first really meaningful federal publication related to juvenile confinement, *Desktop Guide to Good Juvenile Detention Practice*, which was completed and disseminated to over five hundred (500) juvenile detention facilities. The work on this document was done by hundreds of juvenile justice volunteers.

From 1991 to 2000, NJDA continued to grow as a professional organization and employed a completely new strategy by opening offices at Eastern Kentucky University and Michigan State University at an enormous savings to what had historically been high administrative/indirect costs in grantee awards. As NJDA grew, funding awards from OJJDP grew along with it. By the year 2000, NJDA was being funded at an \$850,000 level to focus on many critical juvenile confinement issues. Much of the funding came as a result of the recommendations related to the very first of its kind OJJDP *Study of Conditions of Confinement: Juvenile Detention and Corrections Facilities*.

In early 2001, NJDA along with the National Association of Juvenile Correctional Agencies (NAJCA), Juvenile Justice Trainers Association (JJTA) and the Council for Educators of At-Risk and Delinquent Youth (CEARDY), given the limited resources available from OJJDP, took the proactive step to merge these Organizations into what is now known as the National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS). One of the primary purposes of such an initiative was to find new ways to maximize limited resources and minimize duplication of effort.

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Under your leadership, our efforts have been systematically limited by OJJDP. While there are few if any that can deny the value and cost-effectiveness of our work, funding for projects related to the development of line staff in juvenile confinement was reduced from \$850,000 to \$500,000 then to \$250,000. As of September 30, 2007, we have to assume that this funding has now been reduced to zero in as much as we have not received an acknowledgement from your Office as to any funding being awarded for our proposal submitted on June 7, 2007.

This is deeply troubling that your Office has not provided a courtesy notification of the funding status. Many lives are affected by this lack of consideration. As a result, NPJS and NJDA have been given no opportunity whatsoever to plan for its future direction or prepare its staff for the impact.

It is my strong belief that the NPJS Proposal, titled *National Center for Juvenile Detention and Corrections*, was well received in the OJJDP Peer Review process and scored in the top tier. If this is the case, then the decision on funding reflects the idiosyncrasies of your leadership more so than the professional perspectives of your peer reviewers.

The DOJ and Congressional leadership should consider the following:

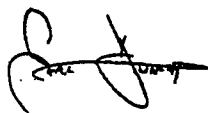
- ∞ No one can deny the attention your Office has given to child/youth victimization. However, it seems a disproportionate amount of your Office's resources have gone into "one basket" while ignoring the many child/youth victims that reside in juvenile confinement facilities. This is easily understood since child victimization gleans so much publicity. I am not insensitive or misinformed about child/youth victimization issues in our communities; I was very much involved in a national leadership capacity in this area, through a Presidential appointment, long before it crossed your radar screen. The absence of a funding balance or equity gives the clear impression that your Office has abandoned the 50,000+ children/youth in juvenile confinement facilities.
- ∞ The Prison Rape Elimination Act requires and the PREA Commission demands an adequate response to child/youth victimization in our juvenile confinement facilities. There is well-documented evidence of an epidemic of child/youth victimization in our juvenile confinement facilities with Texas as the grossest offender. Your Office has disregarded the efforts of the National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS), the organization that has been called upon by jurisdictions more than any other to provide remedies. Anyone needs only review your June 2006 testimony to the PREA Commission to understand the lack of commitment of your Office and the misrepresentations cited as to what resources are provided to the field.
- ∞ The DOJ/CRIPA has undertaken numerous investigations of juvenile confinement facilities related to civil rights violations and inadequate conditions of confinement. Again, your Office has systematically reduced, and now eliminated, a funding to NPJS, the organization that is regularly called upon to address CRIPA remedies in the areas of facility operations and staff training. We wondered for years why your Office never promoted communication between the Civil Rights Division of DOJ and the many technical assistance grantees that are uniformly involved in the institutional problem solving.
- ∞ The NPJS Center for Research and Professional Development (CRPD) at Michigan State University has developed a national reputation for the work that it has done in many state and local jurisdictions around the country in the areas of staff training and targeted technical assistance. CRPD maintained an extraordinary cost-effectiveness on a "shoe string" budget while your Office systematically reduced the funding. Now, despite the outcry of the juvenile justice and juvenile confinement community, this office will soon close.

Juvenile confinement was long ignored in this country and our children/youth and profession have paid an enormous price over the years. We slowly emerged from isolation and, in the past decade, have begun to make enormous strides with very few resources. The juvenile confinement community has learned to make do with very little, and our work has proven an exemplary stewardship of public money. Now, through the leadership of your Office, we are condemned to return to pre-1991 circumstances and make do with nothing. We have to seek funds by reiterating our very simple axiom: *Secure juvenile confinement facilities are a reality of our justice system, but institutions and agencies at the local, state, and national levels cannot secure adequate funding to provide essential staff development and program development at basic levels. Without Federal support, these functions suffer greatly, contributing to the range of inappropriate behaviors that influence negatively the crises in juvenile justice.*

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One final thought: your turning of a "deaf ear" to the atrocities that impact on children/youth and our staff in juvenile confinement facilities is perplexing. We have made every effort over the years to invite you and representatives of your office to participate in our Organization's efforts by communicating your vision and blueprint for juvenile confinement facilities. We have corresponded with you via letter and email. We have received or heard nothing on our proposal and no acknowledgement of our request to meet with you.

We understand that you can and likely will disregard this letter simply as "sour grapes" from a disgruntled grantee whose funding has been eliminated. We would agree, if some other grantee submitted a better proposal to address the aforementioned juvenile confinement needs and functions, but that is not the case. Our outrage stems from your denial to our **profession** of funding for essential services that local and state jurisdictions cannot adequately supply for themselves. I find it reprehensible that the individual named to lead the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention would inflict this loss to a juvenile confinement system in crisis.



Earl L. Dunlap
Chief Executive Officer
National Partnership for Juvenile Services

cc: file

Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., U.S. Senator, Delaware
Honorable Jim Bunning, U.S. Senator, Kentucky
Honorable Ben Chandler, U.S. Representative, Kentucky
Honorable Tom Coburn, U.S. Senator, Oklahoma
Honorable Richard J. Durbin, U.S. Senator, Illinois
Honorable Russell D. Feingold, U.S. Senator, Wisconsin
Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator, California
Honorable Orrin G. Hatch, U.S. Senator, Utah
Honorable Lindsey Graham, U.S. Senator, South Carolina
Honorable Charles E. Grassley, U.S. Senator, Iowa
Honorable Edward M. Kennedy, U.S. Senator, Massachusetts
Honorable Herb Kohl, U.S. Senator, Wisconsin
Honorable Patrick Leahy, U.S. Senator, Vermont
Honorable Carl Levin, U.S. Senator, Michigan
Honorable Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senator, Kentucky
Honorable Hal Rogers, U.S. Representative, Kentucky
Honorable Charles E. Schumer, U.S. Senator, New York
Honorable Jeff Sessions, U.S. Senator, Alabama
Honorable Arlen Specter, U.S. Senator, Pennsylvania
Honorable Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Senator, Michigan
Honorable Reggie Walton, Chairman, Nat'l Prison Rape Elimination Commission
Jacque Reese, NPJS Governing Body Representative, Arkansas
Margaret Davis, NPJS Governing Body Representative, North Carolina
Pam Clark, NPJS Governing Body Representative, Indiana

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