

**EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE**

**Congressman George Miller, Chairman**

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**Chairwoman McCarthy Statement at Subcommittee Hearing on  
“The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act”**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), chairwoman of the House Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities, for a subcommittee hearing on “The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act”*

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Thank you for being here today for our hearing on the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Today we will continue our research and education as we work towards the reauthorization of JJDPA.

As it is with elementary and secondary education, the federal government’s role in juvenile justice is to create a guiding framework or incentives for the states. The states then work within that framework to implement their own juvenile justice systems through laws and regulations.

For us, there are issues to explore as we work to craft a framework for the states that will work to benefit our young people and, ideally, prevent them from being incarcerated. Today we will seek an understanding of the nexus of the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system.

Previous hearings have made it clear to us that these two systems do intersect, and yet they often fall short of helping each other, or even communicating with each other.

The challenge is to foster a complete system of care for our young people so that we can divert them away from the juvenile justice system or get them education and proper care while in the juvenile justice system.

Along those same lines, we will explore the connection of mental health to the juvenile justice system. Again, looking at both the care of youth in the juvenile justice system, but more importantly, prevention of youth suffering from mental health issues from entering the system.

Critical to the experience of the young person in the juvenile justice system is the judge who presides over the case of the young person. The decisions made by the judge determine the future of the youth – an immense responsibility. We need to understand how judges function within the framework of JJDPA and what alternatives judges have to incarceration based on their state laws and regulations.

Each of us on the Subcommittee is committed to helping the young people of our nation, and they need our help. We are not meeting the needs of our nation’s young people very well. For

example, many are afraid to go to school for fear of being bullied and children get lost in the multiple systems meant to help or protect them.

Today we will explore how to improve the juvenile justice system, but I think we all agree prevention and addressing needs on the front end would do much if not more to improve the juvenile justice system.

Again, thank you for being here today. I look forward to your testimonies.

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