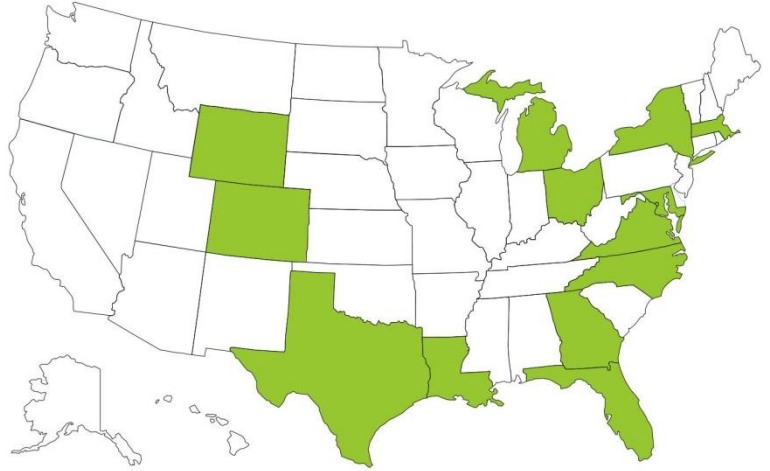


# The National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems

## Report on 2012 Activities

Building on the work of local, state and national juvenile justice reformers, the National Campaign invested in 13 state initiatives during 2012. Even in today's political climate, reforming juvenile justice has united groups across ideological and partisan divides to seek safer, more humane and more cost-effective solutions. While efforts varied from state-to-state, all were aimed at improving outcomes for youth and families by:

- Keeping youth out of the criminal and juvenile justice systems;
- Changing how youth are treated to reflect their developmental differences from adults;
- Increasing the availability and access to effective alternatives to detention and incarceration; and
- Saving taxpayers money, improving public safety, and lowering recidivism.



### STATE POLICY CHANGES IN 2012

The Campaign retained more than 30 campaign coordinators, policy advocates, seasoned strategists, communications professionals, and lobbyists to work with public officials and advocates in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Virginia and Wyoming.

The Campaign supported initiatives to:

- **Reduce reliance on incarceration and expand community services for youth**
  - **Louisiana** improved the Families in Need of Services process and encouraged alternatives to detention and incarceration.
  - **Maryland** delayed further development of a new juvenile detention center in Baltimore City with the goal of blocking construction.
  - **New York** enacted Governor Cuomo's Close to Home initiative that moved more than 300 NYC youth in non-secure and limited secure sites closer to their homes.
  - **Ohio** revised mandatory sentencing for specified crimes and reduced collateral sanctions for youth in the juvenile and adult justice systems.

“New York City has become a national leader on juvenile justice by a combination of sustained police attention to both violent crime and quality-of-life offenses and treating youth at a low risk of reoffending differently from those who pose a high risk — and tailoring services to each group. Through this approach, we now send 62 percent fewer kids to state placements than we did in 2002. But, at the same time, we’ve dramatically cut serious crime among youths. In fact, major felony arrests for youths are down 22 percent since 2006, and fewer youths are violating probation and getting rearrested — 10 percent fewer over just the last two years.” – *New York City Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, March 19, 2012.*

“We all make mistakes and some are more serious than others. It doesn’t mean we don’t carry the responsibility for the mistakes, but when people have a real sense of wanting to get their lives back, who are we to stand in the way of that?” —Governor John Kasich after signing the *Collateral Sanctions Bill*, a measure which removes some of the roadblocks faced by juvenile ex-offenders trying to find work after serving time, July 2012.

- **Curtail the transfer of youth into adult systems**

- **Colorado** limited district attorneys’ ability to directly file youth into adult courts.
- **Virginia** amended its juvenile transfer bill.

- **Limit the practice of school referrals into the justice system**

- **Colorado** required school districts to design detailed plans to reduce student referrals to law enforcement.
- **Louisiana** established a due diligence process to ensure that all available school resources have been utilized before filing a complaint with the court system.

- **Establish a policy and political framework for future reform**

- **Massachusetts** legislators and advocates continued to work to Raise-the-Age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 17 to 18.
- **North Carolina** elected officials and advocates campaigned to Raise-the-Age of adulthood from 16 to 18 and are continuing to interact with a Legislative Research Commission studying the age of juvenile offenders.
- **Texas** advocates worked to make the new Texas Juvenile Justice Department successful. They also supported most of the reform recommendations of the Texas Judicial Council including making local courts the last resort in school discipline matters.
- **Wyoming** advocates supported the work of the Governor’s Task Force on Juvenile Justice to improve the effectiveness of delinquency prevention and juvenile justice and youth service programs.

“I respect the work that the district attorneys do to try to keep communities safe, but this [direct-transfer authority] is just too much power for any one entity to have. There need to be checks and balances so that youth are not caught in the middle of the system.” *Colorado House Representative B.J. Nikkel, May 17, 2012, Stateline.*

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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO REFORM STATE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

In the fall of 2010, led by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, a **Juvenile Justice Funders’ Collaborative** supported by 5 foundations, was formed with the goal of funding state initiatives to accelerate policy reforms in state juvenile justice systems. **Public Interest Projects (PIP)**, a public charity with a 501 (c) (3) tax status, provided a home for the collaborative. PIP launched **The National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems** and retained M+R Strategic Services (M+R) to help design, staff and manage state campaigns.

For more information about **The National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice System**, contact Susan Stamler at [sstamler@mrss.com](mailto:sstamler@mrss.com) or (917) 438-4636