

Massachusetts Coalition for Juvenile Justice Reform

Action for Boston Community Development
ACLU of Massachusetts
Bethel Institute for Social Justice/Generation Excel
Black and Pink
Black Lives Matter- Worcester
Boston Teachers Union
Bridge Over Troubled Waters
Center for Public Representation
Center for Teen Empowerment
Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, Harvard Law School
Children's Law Center of Massachusetts
Children's Mental Health Campaign
The Children's Study Home
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
City Mission Society
The City School
Coalition for Effective Public Safety
Collaborative Parent Leadership Action Network (CPLAN)
College Bound Dorchester
Committee for Public Counsel Services
Community Resources for Justice
Criminal Justice Policy Coalition
Criminal Justice Task Force of Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
Crystal Springs
Determined Divas
Dorchester Youth Collaborative
Ending Mass Incarceration Together
Fair Sentencing of Youth
Fall River Deaconess Home
Families for Justice As Healing
Family Continuity
GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders
Greater Boston Legal Services, CORI & Re-entry Project
The Home for Little Wanderers
High Risk Youth Network
HopeWell
I Have a Future/Youth Jobs Coalition
InnerCity Weightlifting
Jobs Not Jails
Justice Resource Institute
Juvenile Rights Advocacy Program, Boston College Law School
Latham Centers
Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP)
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
LUK, Inc.
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Massachusetts Communities Action Network
Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
MissionSAFE
More Than Words

An Act to Promote Public Safety and Better Outcomes for Young Adults – S.825/H.3420 (Senator Boncore and Representatives O'Day & Khan)

This legislation will hold young people accountable in developmentally appropriate systems by gradually raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include 18 – 20 year olds.

- **Massachusetts currently spends the most money on young adults in the justice system and gets the worst outcomes:** Emerging adults make up 10% of the state population, but represent more than 29% of arrests,ⁱ 23% of Houses of Correction commitments (HOC), and 20% of Department of Correction commitments.ⁱⁱ The Council on State Governments' final report identified emerging adults as a key priority for reform, with the highest recidivism rate in MA (in 2011, 76% of emerging adults released from HOC were re-arraigned within 3 years).ⁱⁱⁱ
- The young adult brain is still developing making them **highly amenable to rehabilitation. This development is influenced – positively or negatively – by their environment.**
- **An overly punitive approach can actually cause more offending:** Most young people "age out" of offending by their mid-twenties, particularly with developmentally appropriate interventions. Exposure to toxic environments, like adult jails and prisons, entrenches young people in problematic behaviors, increasing probability of recidivism.
- Shifting 18- to 20-year-olds into the juvenile system, **where they must attend school and participate in rehabilitative programming, would lower recidivism.** CDC research has shown that similar adolescents had a **34% lower recidivism rate** when they were in the juvenile compared to the adult system.
- **Massachusetts already recognizes the oldest teens – transition age youth – as a distinct population:** child welfare, healthcare, education, labor and other state agencies have created dedicated policies and programs to support young adults' transition to independent adulthood.

Mothers for Justice & Equality
 My Life My Choice
 Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness – MA
 Nat'l Assoc. of Social Workers – MA chapter
 North American Family Institute
 Parents/Professional Advocacy League
 Prisoners' Legal Services
 Project Operation Change
 Project RIGHT
 RFK Children's Action Corp
 Real Costs of Prison ProjectRoca, Inc.
 Roosevelt Institute @ Boston
 Roxbury Youthworks, Inc.
 The Salvation Army/Bridging the Gap
 Between Youth & Community Services
 Sociedad Latina
 Spectrum Health Systems
 Strategies for Youth
 Stuck on Replay
 UTEC
 Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network
 Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry
 Vital Village Network
 Year Up – Greater Boston
 Young Men's Committee (MCI-Norfolk)
 Youth Build Boston
 Youth Villages MA & NH
 YW Boston

This bill would move emerging adults into a developmentally appropriate justice system to reduce recidivism and prevent deeper criminal involvement:

- **Raise the upper age in delinquency and youthful offender (Y.O.) cases to gradually include 18, 19 and 20 year olds over three years.** Our juvenile justice system is designed to provide individualized, developmentally appropriate services for young people. Young adults with serious offenses would still be eligible for adult sentencing in murder and Y.O. cases as is currently law.
- **Expand the upper age of commitment to DYS for emerging adults (18-20) to ensure there is an adequate opportunity to rehabilitate older youth entering the system.** DYS already serves Y.O.s up to age 21; this legislation would allow for extended Y.O. commitment up to age 23.

For more information, please contact Sana Fadel at Citizens for Juvenile Justice, sanafadel@cfjj.org, 617.338.1050

ⁱ Council of State Governments Justice Center, "Justice Reinvestment in Massachusetts: Key Findings and Policy Options," December 21, 2016. Available at https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/JR-in-Massachusetts_Key-Findings-and-Policy-Options.pdf

ⁱⁱ MassINC, "Viewing Justice Reinvestment Through a Developmental Lens: New approaches to reducing young adult recidivism in Massachusetts," December, 2015. Available at <http://massinc.org/research/viewing-justice-reinvestment-through-a-developmental-lens/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Council of State Governments Justice Center, "Justice Reinvestment in Massachusetts: Policy Framework," February 21, 2017. Available at <https://csgjusticecenter.org/jr/massachusetts/publications/justice-reinvestment-in-massachusetts-policy-framework/>