

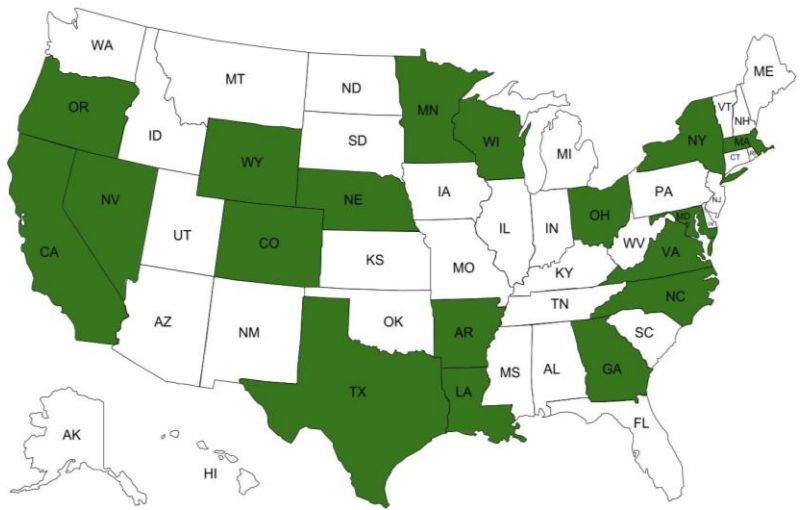
The National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems

Report on 2013 Activities

2013 was the third year of the National Campaign to Reform State Juvenile Justice Systems. Building on a successful track record, the Campaign assisted **18 state** initiatives, supporting **46 bills** as well as numerous other administrative and policy changes.

While efforts varied from state-to-state, all were aimed at improving outcomes for youth and families. Across the country, the Campaign supported initiatives to:

- Treat kids as kids: changing how youth are treated to reflect their developmental differences from adults;
- Address mental health and behavioral concerns;
- Provide community based alternatives to the formal court process and incarceration; and
- Ensure that youth have access to quality legal representation.



STATE POLICY CHANGES IN 2013

The Campaign retained more than 50 campaign coordinators, policy experts, seasoned strategists, communications professionals, and lobbyists to work with public officials and advocates in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The Campaign supported initiatives to:

- **Treat kids as kids**
 - The **California** state legislature passed legislation that allows youth sentenced to periods of incarceration of 100 years or more without chance of parole to petition the court for resentencing after serving a minimum of 15 years.
 - The **Massachusetts** state legislature passed legislation to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to include 17 year olds.
 - **Minnesota** passed legislation to limit public access to juvenile arrest and court records of 16 and 17 year olds.
 - **Nevada** eliminated the use of solitary confinement as a disciplinary tool in juvenile facilities and raised the age that a murder or attempted murder charge can be directly filed in criminal court from 8 to 16 years.
 - **Wyoming**: required that law enforcement inform legal guardians when a child is served with a citation.
- **Address mental health and behavioral concerns**
 - **Louisiana** passed legislation to create integrated case management systems among youth-serving agencies for at-risk juveniles.
 - **Ohio** secured an additional \$1 million over two years in the state budget for community based mental health services.

Let me be very clear. This effort is critical. This effort is essential. I do not feel we can wait any more for a real solution to our issues involving juvenile justice.
—Nebraska Senator Brad Ashford, March 6, 2013.

- **Texas** ended the practice of ticketing students for disciplinary problems in school and eliminated the offenses “Disruption of Class” and “Disruption of Transportation” from the juvenile code.
- **Virginia** narrowed the statute requiring suspension for carrying a weapon in school to only address guns (previously the statute included knives, box cutters, sling shots and other objects). A different bill clarified that school officials have discretion to address incidents misconduct that could rise to a misdemeanor without filing a formal petition.
- **Provide Community-Based Alternatives**
 - **Georgia** rewrote the entire juvenile code. Among other measures, the new code allows for unsupervised probation and requires a risk needs assessment before an order for detention. The state budget now includes additional funding for community-based alternatives to detention.
 - **New York** preserved funding for alternatives to detention and incarceration programs that give counties flexibility to decide how best to spend their allocations.
 - **Maryland** revised the juvenile code to prohibit the placement of youth whose most serious offense is possession of marijuana, disorderly conduct, prostitution, drug possession or theft except in very rare circumstances.
 - **Nebraska** substantially reorganized the state’s juvenile justice system, restricted use of placement, created a committee to study the types of services and facilities that the system should provide, and included an additional \$5 million over two years for diversion programs.
- **Ensure that youth have access to quality legal representation**
 - **Colorado** created an interim committee to study the role of legal defense counsel in juvenile justice proceedings.
 - **Georgia** required that youth are entitled to representation at all stages of a status offender proceeding.
 - **Ohio** authorized the State Public Defender to conduct a legal assistance referral service for children committed to the Department of Youth Services who allege conditions of confinement claims.

“Now, we have helped the juvenile justice system. We acted because Georgia could not afford its own numbers. Not when we have more than half of all youth offenders ending up back in a detention center or prison within three years. Not when we have each youth in a detention center costing Georgia’s taxpayers \$90,000 or more every year and not when 40 percent of juveniles in detention facilities are considered a low risk to reoffend. We worked hard and we found ways to keep low-risk offenders out of detention centers and save taxpayer dollars, nearly \$85 million over five years, while also eliminating the need for two new facilities. We did all this while not only maintaining but improving public safety.” – *Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, May 2, 2013.*

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO REFORM STATE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

In the fall of 2010, a **Juvenile Justice Funders’ Collaborative** was formed to support state initiatives aimed at accelerating policy reforms of 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 staff and manage state campaigns.

For more information about ***The National Campaign***, contact nationalcampaign@mrss.com or (917) 438-4638.