



HR0693

LRB101 16775 MST 66168 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The current youth justice system is not applied  
3 fairly or equitably and can thus not provide the best possible  
4 outcomes for our nation's children, families, or public safety;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, 2015 Bureau of Justice statistics show that more  
7 than 5,000 youth are incarcerated in jails and adult prisons on  
8 any given day in the U.S.; and

9           WHEREAS, According to the NAACP, 2019 statistics show that  
10 African American children represent 52% of children whose cases  
11 are judicially waived to the criminal court, though they  
12 comprise only 16% of youth in the U.S.; and

13           WHEREAS, The justice system as currently designed does not  
14 adequately recognize the different developmental stages of  
15 young people and the opportunities that these stages offer for  
16 their life trajectories; and

17           WHEREAS, There is considerable ambiguity around the  
18 appropriateness and involvement of younger children as there is  
19 no age limit for entry into our delinquency system; and

20           WHEREAS, There is a growing understanding of how trauma can

1 materially impact brain growth and behavior and how punitive  
2 responses to behavior often do not result in desired behavior  
3 or the well-being of children and families; and

4 WHEREAS, Youth are more likely than adults to be  
5 permanently traumatized by the harsh realities of the adult  
6 prison system; according to the National Prison Rape  
7 Elimination, "more than any other group of incarcerated  
8 persons, youth incarcerated with adults are probably at the  
9 highest risk of sexual abuse"; and

10 WHEREAS, As of 2016, there are more than 3,700 youth still  
11 in adult prisons; youth convicted in the adult system receive  
12 little or no rehabilitative programming, which is mandated in  
13 the juvenile system; and

14 WHEREAS, A study by the Department of Justice found that 76  
15 percent of prisoners under the age of 25 when released were  
16 rearrested within three years, and 84 percent were rearrested  
17 within five years; and

18 WHEREAS, A 2015 study by the Campaign for Youth Justice  
19 found that incarcerated youth are at the highest risk for  
20 sexual abuse, and to protect them in adult facilities, children  
21 are often placed in solitary confinement, where they are kept  
22 in their cells for 22-23 hours a day; and

1           WHEREAS, The current system arranges individuals into two  
2 categories, juveniles and adults, and it does not recognize the  
3 "emerging adults", individuals 18-25 years old who have  
4 distinct needs; and

5           WHEREAS, According to a study by the U.S. Department of  
6 Justice, black male emerging adults comprised nearly 40% of all  
7 emerging adults admitted to state and federal prisons in the  
8 U.S. in 2012, and they are 7-9 times more likely to end up in  
9 prison compared to their white peers; therefore, be it

10           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
11 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
12 we urge legislators, municipalities, law enforcement  
13 officials, judicial system decision makers, legal  
14 professionals, school systems, and key stakeholders to achieve  
15 more fair, just, equitable, and effective outcomes by embracing  
16 a developmental approach to the treatment of children and  
17 emerging adults in the justice system through:

18           (1) Reducing disproportionality and disparities based  
19 on race, ethnicity, gender, ability status, and sexual  
20 orientation or gender identity and expression among  
21 children and emerging adults in the justice system;

22           (2) Ensuring youth and emerging adults in the justice  
23 system maintain supportive relationships and have

1 appropriate guidance and counsel from legal professionals  
2 and caregivers;

3 (3) Implementing policies and practices to reduce harm  
4 and improve outcomes for justice-involved youth in  
5 accordance with knowledge from developmental science;

6 (4) Ensuring that for those youth and young adults in  
7 the justice system, policies and practices prioritize the  
8 health and educational needs and avoid causing harm;

9 (5) Ensuring that through all developmental stages of  
10 young people, including emerging adult, our justice system  
11 provides age and developmentally appropriate services and  
12 supports, life skills development, rigorous education, and  
13 fresh starts so young people have the best opportunity to  
14 successfully transition into law abiding and productive  
15 adulthood; and

16 (6) Promoting a strong collaboration among impacted  
17 communities, governmental agencies and the non-profit  
18 sector, along with partnerships with diverse community  
19 stakeholders who will provide technical assistance,  
20 support, and engagement with decision-making; and be it  
21 further

22 RESOLVED, That we urge Congress to enact legislation that  
23 supports and ensures the justice system utilizes a culturally  
24 responsive and trauma-informed developmental approach to youth  
25 justice; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
2 delivered to the President of the United States, the Vice  
3 President of the United States, members of the United States  
4 House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and  
5 other federal and state government officials as appropriate.