



End Youth Detention

SB 5596 (sponsor: Sen. Darneille)

2018 Vision and Goal:

Pass **SB 5596** to phase out the use of secure detention for youth who commit status offenses such as running away, truancy, or curfew violations. **Expand services available statewide** to families and youth in crisis through the development of a new Family in Need of Services (FINS) petition. **Ensure there are long-term housing options** for youth who run away and cannot safely return home.

Washington is one of the few states that detain youth for status offenses. Federal law forbids this except if the youth violates a court order, known as the “valid court order (VCO) exception.” In Washington state, a youth can be detained for up to 7 days for violating court orders in truancy, at-risk youth, child in need of services, or dependency cases.

The Facts:

- Washington state sent youth to detention for a status offense 1,781 times in 2016. That’s **13.4% of all juvenile detention admissions**.
- **A stay in detention is a predictive factor for future justice system involvement.** Youth detained for status offenses had an average of 1.9 detention stays within one year.
- Use of detention varies across the state, with some counties detaining youth in 30% of cases, and others in 2% of cases.
- **Black, Latino, and Native American youth are more likely to be detained** for a status offense than white youth.

Youth Perspective:

“I was detained a total of eight times during my time in foster care, each time for running away from my group home. I felt so unsafe [in my placement] that running away seemed like the best option at the time. But I was placed back there upon my release from detention multiple times. Since I ran away from foster care placement while on probation I had to do time for the probation violation too. This dual serving of sentences made finishing school nearly impossible. Often I was in detention longer than youth arrested for serious felonies.”



– Zack, age 19

Join us in Olympia for Youth Advocacy Day
on January 26, 2018!



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