

**Testimony of the Juvenile Justice Coalition**  
**House Finance Transportation Subcommittee**  
**HB 49: FY18-19 Budget Bill**  
**March 21, 2017**

Chair McColley, Vice Chair Reece, and members of the House Finance Transportation Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on HB 49, Ohio's budget bill for the FY18-19 biennium. My name is Erin Davies and I am the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Coalition (JJC).

JJC is a state-wide advocacy organization that focuses on youth in Ohio's juvenile courts and works to align current practice with research-based, best practices that improve outcomes for youth involved or at-risk of involvement in the juvenile court system, their families, their communities, and all Ohioans. I am here to testify on two specific budget issues that impact this population of youth.

- 1) Funding for DYS's Community-Based Programs: HB 49 contains level funding for DYS's range of community-based programs, which includes RECLAIM, Competitive RECLAIM, the Behavioral Health and Juvenile Justice programs (BHJJ), and Targeted RECLAIM. This array of programs has been critical to redirecting youth out of Ohio's youth prisons and into effective, cost-efficient community-based programs that produce better outcomes of youth. Since 1992, Ohio's youth prison population has been cut from over 3,000 youth to under 500 youth in 2016.

The cost-savings associated with these changes are significant. In 2016, incarcerating one youth in a DYS youth prison cost almost \$186,000 per year – the equivalent of 8 years of undergraduate education at The Ohio State University. In contrast, serving one youth in the BHJJ programs costs just over \$5,000 with better outcomes, including reduced reoffending. Over the past several decades, the implementation of the programs listed above resulted in the closure of a DYS facility, saving the state tens of millions of dollars. While some of this money was retained by DYS in the FY16-17 budget to reinvest in youth, the majority of the funding was redirected to the GRF.

While we appreciate that these programs were maintained a level funding from the last budget bill, JJC believes that DYS's community-based programs are a smart, effective investment in taxpayer dollars and should be expanded to serve youth in additional counties or redirected to research-based programming. (see Figure 1 below) In this and future budgets, we encourage the expansion of funding for DYS's community-based programs and the guaranteed reinvestment of savings achieved by DYS into effective programs that improve outcomes for youth and all Ohioans.

- 2) Proposed Amendment to Fund Data Collection: While Ohio has been leading the way on community-based programming, one area where Ohio has fallen behind other states is on data collection. Each year, Ohio's juvenile courts handle over 90,000 delinquency and unruly cases. Unfortunately, data on youth in Ohio's juvenile courts is extremely piecemeal. DYS collects uniform data on youth who have been adjudicated delinquent of felonies, confined in youth prisons, or transferred to adult court. However, these youth are an extremely small portion of the number of youth involved in juvenile courts – likely only about 5%. In addition, DYS collects data on youth in DYS funded community-based programs, but not all youth who are court-involved are in a DYS funded program. Therefore, we do not know as a state how many youth are involved in Ohio's juvenile courts. Finally, state law requires each court to prepare and file an annual report showing “the number and kinds of cases that have come before it, the disposition of the cases, and any other data pertaining to the work of the court that the juvenile judge directs.” However, the data from these reports differs significantly from county to county and is not compiled in any centralized way. (see attached infographic)

This lack of a centralized, uniform data collection system puts Ohio behind every state with a larger population across the U.S. (see attached summary and links). Without uniform data, it is difficult to determine where Ohio – both at the state and local level– should be best directing our resources most efficiently to get the best

results for youth, families, and communities. In addition, this lack of data can make Ohio less competitive for grants or other funding. Finally, not having data impedes effective collaborations with other systems – such as substance abuse, mental health, and education systems.

Based on these concerns, JJC – along with other organizations across the state – is proposing an amendment that would direct \$1 million in funding to the Ohio Supreme Court to take concrete steps toward implementing a statewide data collection system for Ohio’s juvenile courts. The funding should flow through a work group comprised of the Ohio Supreme Court, DHS, juvenile court judges, and advocates with the purpose of creating an implementation plan to have statewide, uniform data collection from juvenile courts by 2020. Specifically, the work group will utilize the funding to 1) develop a uniform data collection report, 2) do a survey of courts to assess abilities and barriers to collect data, 3) begin providing training/technical assistance to courts to collect data, and 4) put together a cost assessment based on these findings to determine what additional monetary support would be needed. The budget request could include an outside consultant to make this evaluation. This funding could either be 1) new money or 2) funding set aside from the Court’s annual \$3.5 Ohio Courts Technology Initiative

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today and I welcome any questions.

Figure 1. DHS Community-Based Incarceration Alternative Programs

| OVERVIEW OF OHIO'S FIVE DEINCARCERATION PROGRAMS |                     |              |                     |                       |                            |  |                              |  |
|--|---------------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
|  | PROGRAM             | YEAR STARTED | ANNUAL YOUTH SERVED | ANNUAL FUNDING (FY15) | OUTCOME OR EVIDENCE BASED? | OUTCOME/GOAL   | COUNTIES REACHED (OUT OF 88) | DISTRIBUTION   |
| SUBSIDY PROGRAMS                                 | Youth Services      | 1980-81      | 80,000 YOUTH        | \$16.7 million        | NO                         | Provide basic court needs  | 88                           | Population   |
|  | RECLAIM             | 1995         |                     | \$30.6 million        | NO                         | Reduce admissions to correctional facilities   | Up to 88                     | Formula  |
| COMPETITIVE PROGRAMS                             | BHJJ                | 2005         | 250 YOUTH (average) | \$2.6 million         | YES                        | Improve treatment for youth with high levels of need   | 12                           | Competitive  |
|  | Targeted RECLAIM    | 2009         | 748 YOUTH (2014)    | \$6.4 million         | YES                        | Reduce admissions to correctional facilities   | 15                           | Counties with the highest number of youth adjudicated delinquent or felonies |
|  | Competitive RECLAIM | 2015         |                     | \$2.2 million         | YES                        | Create 1) diversion programs for low-risk youth, 2) intervention programs for moderate- and high-risk youth, and 3) multi-county collaborations. | 24                           | Competitive  |

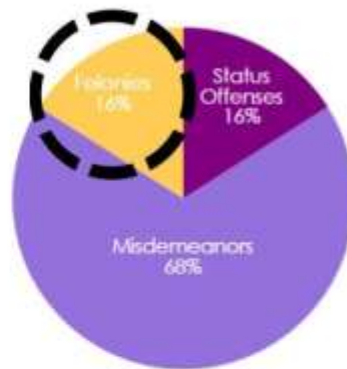
# DENIED EXISTENCE: THE UNTOLD STORIES OF 90,000 CASES IN OHIO'S JUVENILE COURTS

Every year, hundreds of thousands of Ohio's children and families go through Ohio's juvenile courts at a cost of over \$230 million each year at the state level alone.

Only a Small Number of Cases Have Comprehensive Data



The Majority of Data is On A Minority of Cases

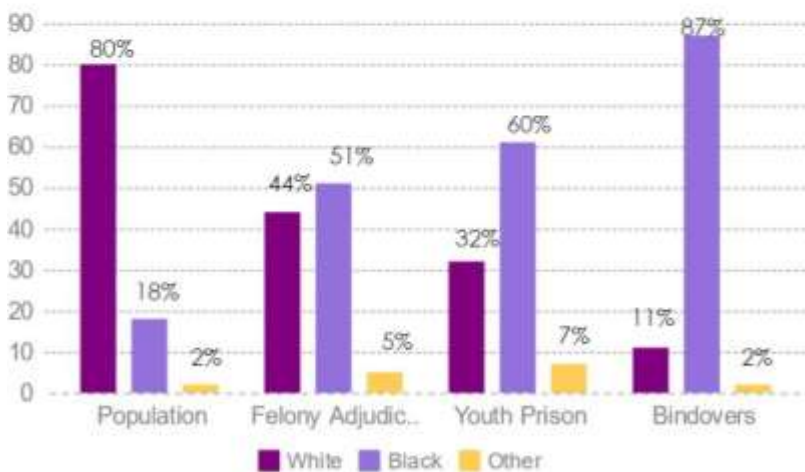


Less Than Half Of Ohio Courts Have Publicly Available Annual Reports



But Some Courts Are Leading the Way on Data Collection.

## THE LITTLE DATA WE COLLECT SHOW DISTURBING TRENDS



Black youth are disproportionately represented in the deep end of the system.

Whole Populations of Youth Are Missing, Like Youth Who:



## HOW DO WE GET YOUTH OUT OF OHIO'S DATA MAZE?

#1 Decide Who's in Charge

#2 Choose Consistent Data to Collect



#3 Give Courts Tools to Collect Data

#4 Make Data Available to Communities

## **State Juvenile Justice Data Collection Efforts Summary: October 2016**

The following links show juvenile justice data collection efforts in the most populous states across the U.S.:

- [California](#): California's annual report tracks youth throughout their juvenile court involvement and contains information on arrests, referrals to probation, formal dispositions, and adult court dispositions. The report includes demographic information on youth at each stage of the proceedings.
- [Texas](#): Texas's report highlights spending on juvenile justice and focuses on interventions with youth, including outcomes for each of those interventions. The report also reflects the demographics of youth referred to interventions.
- [Florida](#): Florida's annual comprehensive accountability report has sections on detention, education, health, intake, civil citations, prevention, probation and community interventions, and residential services. Each of these sections include more specific information. For example, the intake section details the number of youth, 5 year trends, demographic information, and offense level.
- [New York](#): New York compiles a statewide juvenile justice profile that includes information on arrest, detention, probation intake, initial actions, outcomes, offenses, post-dispositional outcomes, and out-of-home placements. Demographic information is available for each of these categories.
- [Illinois](#): Illinois' report covers various touch points in the system, arrests, detention, court and probation trends, and corrections. The report includes key overarching findings and trends for courts throughout the states.
- [Pennsylvania](#): Pennsylvania's data collection system is a national model and contains a database that can be searched by many variables, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, school and family status, living arrangements, highest grade completed, type of legal representation, detention, formal or informal handling, hearing type, adjudicated delinquent, offense, and disposition. The state also creates pre-compiled reports that highlight certain aspects of the system.
- [Georgia](#): Georgia has various reports and dashboards available by juvenile justice decision points, including at-risk, arrest, referrals, diversion, detention, petitions, delinquency, commitments, and adult court.