

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Reauthorization Act of 2017 (S.860) Passed by Senate

On August 1, 2017 the U.S. Senate passed the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Reauthorization Act of 2017 (S.860), to update and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) of 1974. This new legislation was championed by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island) to secure new protections for minors and improve accountability measures in the federal juvenile justice grant program.

"Youngsters who encounter the juvenile justice system should be treated safely, fairly and in a manner that encourages greater respect for the law. The federal juvenile justice program helps states achieve these fundamental goals, but the program hasn't been updated in more than a decade. Today's action by the Senate to pass this bill is a significant step toward ensuring that the program is functioning as intended. The bill includes important new accountability requirements that safeguard taxpayer dollars and prevent states from being rewarded when failing to provide the minimum standard of protections for minors. I'm grateful for the work of Senator Whitehouse and all those who came together in this effort,"
Grassley said.

"This bill will help kids in the system to turn things around, return home, and stay out of trouble. It helps to stop practices that do more harm than good, like confining young people with adults or putting them in solitary confinement. It helps kids stay on track at school. If the real reason they're in the system is a mental health condition or a battle with addiction, this bill helps to tackle those problems – not make them worse. For years, Rhode Islanders have told me what works and what doesn't in our juvenile justice system, and I'm proud to put their contributions to work in this bill. Thank you to Chairman Grassley for joining me to see this through the Senate,"
Whitehouse said.

The JJDPA of 1974 is the only federal statute that sets national standards for the custody and care of youth in the juvenile justice system, and long overdue for reauthorization. The newly passed bipartisan legislation, S.860, takes steps to reduce the unnecessary incarceration of youth, improves safeguards for minors who encounter the justice system, and strengthens services that encourage a smooth transition back into society. S.860 will also enhance existing law by:

- improving treatment for juvenile offenders with mental illness and substance abuse issues;
- encouraging states to make efforts to identify, report and reduce racial and ethnic disparities for youth who enter the juvenile justice system;
- supporting alternatives to incarceration, such as problem-solving courts; and,
- strengthening oversight of the federal grant program and holding states accountable for failing to meet core grant requirements to protect the safety of minors in the justice system.

Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps, home to the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, is proud to support the reauthorization of JJDPA and applauds Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) for their bipartisan leadership and sponsorship of S.860. Please join us on [Twitter](#) to show your support!

Thanks @ChuckGrassley & @SenWhitehouse for your leadership in passing S860! Support #JJDPA to improve community safety & outcomes for youth!

Additional information:

- Press release issued by the Office of Senator Grassley ([click here](#))
- Full list of the bill's key provisions ([click here](#))
- S.860 complete text ([click here](#))