Rutgers Camden:

Creating Bridges for Camden Youth: Juvenile Justice Concerns and Local Solutions

March 24, 2015
Our country’s reliance on confinement has proven to be a failed strategy for combating youth crime

**JUVENILE CONFINEMENT IS:**

- America’s juvenile corrections institutions subject confined youth to intolerable levels of violence, abuse, and other forms of maltreatment.

- The outcomes of correctional confinement are poor. Recidivism rates are almost uniformly high, and incarceration in juvenile facilities depresses youths’ future success in education and employment.

- A substantial percentage of youth confined in youth corrections facilities pose minimal risk to public safety.

- Scholars have identified a number of interventions that consistently reduce recidivism without the use of incarceration.

- States are spending vast sums of taxpayer money on correctional institutions, when non-residential programs deliver equal or better results for a fraction of the cost.

- Despite the cost, most correctional facilities are ill-prepared to address the needs of many confined youth. Often, they fail to provide even the minimum services appropriate for care and rehabilitation.
The use of detention and post-dispositional residential placement has fallen substantially in recent years.

RATE OF YOUTH IN CONFINEMENT
per 100,000 youth (1975-2011)

Since 1997, the rate of youth in confinement has dropped by 45%
But while juvenile confinement has declined significantly, there is still much more work to be done.

From 1997 to 2011, juvenile crime dropped by 48%, but the rate at which youth were confined (relative to arrests) was virtually unchanged.

NUMBER OF YOUTH IN CUSTODY
PER 1,000 JUVENILE ARRESTS¹
1997 vs. 2011

1997: 37
2011: 41


And even after recent reductions, our use of incarceration for young people sets us apart from other nations.

The mass confinement of children in the United States is a distinctively American practice, unmatched in any other Western democracy.

**JUVENILE INCARCERATION RATE: US vs. other nations**

Per 100,000 youth

- Australia: 24.9
- England & Wales: 46.8
- Finland: 3.6
- France: 18.6
- Germany: 23.1
- Italy: 11.3
- Japan: 0.1
- Netherlands: 51.3
- New Zealand: 68.0
- Scotland: 33.0
- South Africa: 69.0
- Sweden: 4.1
- USA*: 195.0

*Note that the USA rate is updated to reflect the most recent national data, while other rates are based on the 2008 study.

Furthermore, this is an inherently unfair system, with youth of color bearing the brunt of our reliance on confinement.

African American youth are nearly five times as likely to be confined as their white peers. Latino and American Indian youth are between two and three times as likely to be confined.
CALCULATING THE FULL PRICE TAG FOR YOUTH INCARCERATION

JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE | DECEMBER 2014
New Jersey: Cost to incarcerate 1 youth for 1 year

$196,133
And for those youth who are still confined, the facilities that hold them have changed very little, if at all.
Our partnerships with sites who have taken on deep end reform are built on the foundations laid by JDAI.

Youth in active JDAI sites: 31%

Other youth in states scaling up JDAI: 32%

Youth in non-JDAI sites or states: 37%

Other youth in states scaling up JDAI: 32%