GEORGIA REFORM

Developing Alternatives for Low Risk Offenders through Re-Investment of Cost-Savings

Georgia Criminal Justice Reform Council

• First established by Governor Nathan Deal in 2011 to reform the adult criminal justice system
• Recommendations adopted by Legislature in 2012;
• Governor Deal re-established Council in 2012 to reform the juvenile justice system and appointed Judge Teske;
• Governor contracted the Pew Trust on the States and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for technical assistance;
• Council became informed on Georgia statistics and evidence informed practices
Out of Home: Non-secure Residential

- Non-Secure Residential
  - Group homes, emergency shelters, wilderness/outdoor, therapeutic programs
  - Can be utilized as alternatives to detention, Short Term Programs, or residential placements
  - Private facilities include numerous non-secure residential placement locations
  - DJJ accesses over 300 beds, roughly 15% are for non-secure detention

Risk levels of youth in non-secure residential treatment, 2011 (snapshot date)

- Low: 49%
- Medium: 40%
- High: 11%

Source: Risk levels adapted from Georgia Juvenile Corrections System Overview Analysis presentation, September 5, 2012

Out of Home Placement: Youth Development Campuses

- YDCs provide secure care, supervision and treatment services to youth who have been committed to the custody of DJJ
- YDCs provide youth services that include education, health and mental health services, food services, resident counseling, substance abuse units, vocational programming, and family visitation, among other services

Risk level of youth in YDC on snapshot date, 2011

- Low: 38%
- Medium: 37%
- High: 25%

Source: Risk levels adapted from Georgia Juvenile Corrections System Overview Analysis presentation, September 5, 2012
Recidivism

Three Year Recidivism Rates by Placement Type, FY2007

- YDC Cmt.: 65%
- YDC & Residential Cnt.: 66%
- Residential Cnt.: 54%
- Community Cnt.: 63%
- STP & Probation: 72%
- STP: 58%
- Probation: 45%

Source: Georgia SOI

Key Findings:
Non-Secure Residential

- 54% recidivism rate
- Nearly half of youth are low risk
- Multiple agencies utilize the same facilities
- To reduce recidivism, more work needs to be done to target services to higher risk offenders and address what drives criminal behavior.
Policy Recommendations Made Law

- Judge shall not commit a child to the state on any misdemeanor offense unless there are four prior adjudications and one must be a felony.
- Judge shall perform a risk and needs assessment on every child at disposition.
- No status offender shall be placed in a secure facility.
- Designated Felonies divided into class A & B
- Schools shall not refer students to the Court without exhausting least restrictive measures.
School Referrals

When filing a complaint alleging a child in need of services, the school must show the following:

• The school district has sought to resolve the expressed problem through available educational approaches; and

• The school district has sought to engage the parent, guardian, or custodian of such child in solving the problem but such person has been unwilling or unable to do so, that the problem remains, and that court intervention is needed.

Impact of Law

• $88 million cost savings per year for six years;
• $55 million cost savings thereafter;
• Cost-Savings placed in Re-Investment Program that will re-direct to all juvenile courts state-wide to treat low risk youth (including students at risk)