



1375 West 16th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
www.mccooyouth.org

February 9, 2021

The Honorable Mike Young, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law
200 W. Washington Street
State House, Room 130
Indianapolis, IN. 46204

Dear Chairman Young and members of the Senate Corrections and Criminal Law Committee:

MCCOY, with the undersigned organizations and individuals, are writing in support of Senate Bill 368, Juvenile Justice. While this bill addresses much needed ways to protect and support children who interact with the justice system, it also addresses and improves current problems with systemic racism and racial disparities within Indiana's justice system for children.

This bill will prevent children from being in adult facilities while awaiting trial which will keep children safe from physical and sexual abuse. Currently in Indiana, children as young as 12-years-old could be subject to pre-trial incarceration in adult facilities. Recent studies have shown that juveniles in adult facilities are 200% more likely to be beaten by staff, 50% more likely to be attacked with a weapon, and 500% more likely to be victims of sexual assault than juveniles in juvenile facilities. Additionally, youth housed in adult jails are 36 times more likely to die by suicide than youth housed in juvenile detention.

This bill will create a standard or evaluation process to determine juvenile competency to stand trial. When as many as 80% of incarcerated youth have a mental health disorder, the juvenile justice system is often ill-equipped to meet their needs. Indiana is currently one of only five states in the country without competency to stand trial requirements for juveniles; by implementing these requirements, Indiana's juvenile court practices will align with the juvenile system's original purpose: rehabilitation.

This bill will abolish the sentence of juvenile life without parole. Indiana is currently one of only 20 states that have not banned life without parole for children and we currently have at least one person serving this sentence. A juvenile given this sentence will die in prison. Black youth are sentenced to life without parole as children at a per capita rate that is 10 times greater than that of white youth. The US Supreme Court has written decisions stating that (with the exception of some cases where the juvenile demonstrates "irreparable corruption,") this practice qualifies as "cruel and unusual punishment," thus Indiana should join the majority of US states and abolish this practice entirely.



info@mccooyouth.org



1375 West 16th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
www.mccooyouth.org

This bill will implement a system to automatically expunge juvenile records. Many people do not realize that they must take action to request expungement, and even when they do, the process can be confusing or challenging for a young person to do without the help of an attorney or without access to counsel. Juvenile records can create barriers for young people to pursue higher education, join the military, and secure housing, financial aid, and employment. Implementing an automatic expungement system will help reduce the risk of recidivism.

We strongly support SB 368 because it will provide added resources, protections, and supports for youth who interact with Indiana's justice system. When this bill is heard in your committee on Tuesday morning, we please ask for you to vote "yes."

Sincerely,

MCCOY (Marion County Commission on Youth)
Brookside Community Development Corporation
Claude McNeal Productions
Collective Impact Training and Consulting, LLC
Concerned Clergy of Indianapolis
Helping Hands Childcare & Preschool
Indianapolis Algebra Project, Inc.
Indianapolis Urban League
ProAct Indy
Saint Florian Youth Leadership Development Center
Thrive Nonprofit Solutions
Westminster Neighborhood Services, INC

John Brandon, President and CEO, MCCOY
Sarah Williams, Public Policy and Advocacy
Director, MCCOY
Kenneth Allen, Commissioner
Krista Anderson
Emily Angel, Attorney
Cassie Appleton, Community Coordinator at IPS
#58
Megan Banet
Lillian Barkes

Kate Bathon Shufeldt, CEO, Thrive Nonprofit
Solutions
Dountonia S. Batts, Community Engagement
Strategist
Sara Beanblossom
Johnna Belkiewitz
Kareema Boykin
Amber W. Brookins, Youth Coordinator
Cathy Burris
Derrick Carnes



info@mccooyouth.org



1375 West 16th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202
www.mccooyouth.org

Jessica Carroll
Leigh Crawford
Olivia Cronin
Angel Crone
Alan Davis
Linda Diakite Karressy
Robin E. Donaldson
Sandra Felix
Whitney Fields
Rocio Gardner
Lauren Gilbert
Jim Grim, citizen
LaMarcus Hall
Julie Hayden
Madison Henderson
Karen Jackson-Gray
Kathleen A. Janes, Youth Supporter
Angela Jenkins
Kelli Jensen
Jonathan D. Johnson
Katina Kindle
Teresa Lee-Robinson, Executive Director, Helping
Hands Childcare & Preschool
Marc R. Levy
Maryam Olaletan
Conner Lopp
Tony Mason, President & CEO, Indianapolis Urban
League
Joanna Menke, CKD
Michael Morgan
Cynthia Muse
Andrew Neal
Emily Nelson
Jeff Owen
Pier Parsey
Guadalupe Pimentel Solano

Stephanie Poorman
Alicia Ransberger
Becky Reich
Jeananne Reich, Director of Indiana CYC
Certification
Josette Robinson, Community Leadership Officer
and Concerned Citizen
Elizabeth Ryan
Lindsay Scott, Youth Serving Professional and
Volunteer
Ashley Shufflebarger
Derrin Slack, Founder, ProAct Indy
Katherine Souchet
Kayleigh Smith
Heather L. Starks
Bethany E. Stewart
Ginny Swale
Ashley Thomas
Sara Tippet MSW, LSW
Nicole Walker
DeAnna Warren
Genna West
Allison Vila
Colleen Yeakle, MSW
Erica Young, Director



info@mccooyouth.org