



**44 School Street, Suite 400  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108**



You can turn these  
into a high school  
diploma

Date

Name

Address

Address

City, State Zip

Dear XXXXXX,

What's likely to happen to a kid after going to juvenile detention?

- A. They'll drop out of high school.
- B. They'll get arrested again.
- C. They'll get kicked off the team for missing too many practices.
- D. They'll have a hard time finding a steady job.

The answer is: *all of the above.*

**Combine the trauma of your typical 3-week stint in detention with an arrest record, and you've put a teen on a path it's hard to recover from.**

It doesn't have to be this way. That's why I'm writing to you today.

Your past support has made a huge difference – *thank you!* I hope I can count on your help again now...

Because here's the saddest part -- the majority of these kids end up with their case dismissed or placed on probation. But by then, it's too late...

**The first domino has fallen. And, the rest is all too predictable.**

One minute, you're accused of stealing a pair of sunglasses. The next, you're facing lock-up.

Isolated from your family...

Missing weeks of school...

Subjected to strip searches and shackling...

Saddled with an arrest record that can haunt you for life...

It doesn't matter if your case is dismissed... or, if you're found innocent....

Your future has changed forever. That's how the system works.

And that's why I need your help.

Because you have the power to change all this...

**You have the power to turn handcuffs into high school diplomas for kids across Massachusetts.**

Juvenile detention is traumatic.

Kids are handcuffed, shackled, and strip searched.

They live in **jail-like conditions, sleeping in locked rooms with strangers** who might be much bigger and much older than they are.

Many kids will even refuse visitors, including their parents, because they have to endure a strip search after each and every visit.

**You and I both know there are less destructive and less costly ways to hold youth accountable...**

Study after study proves -- incarcerating teenagers sets them up to be high school dropouts, unable to find a job, and more likely to commit future crimes.

That's why Citizens for Juvenile Justice supports alternatives to court processing to hold kids accountable while also getting them what they need...

At the heart of diversion is a belief I know you and I both share... it's the belief that locking kids up should only be used as a last resort.

That's why Citizens for Juvenile Justice is promoting a law that would allow courts to **direct kids to more appropriate programs, treatment, or community service before they are arraigned or sent to detention.**



*Barbed wire at this juvenile detention center isn't the only similarity to adult prisons. Kids are also subjected to strip searches when they arrive and after seeing visitors – some refuse to see their parents or family to avoid this violation.*

It's a game changer for the future of so many kids.

Here's what you make possible when you support alternative ways to hold kids accountable...

- Time spent in the classroom, not the courtroom
- Time spent at sports, counseling, or in extracurricular activities, instead of at a youth detention center
- No interruption of special education or mental health services
- No removal from the home or isolation from family and friends
- Freedom to pursue education and employment without the lifelong burden of a criminal record

**You can make all of this a reality for kids across the Commonwealth by lending your support again today.**

Diverting low-level cases from court isn't just morally right, it's also less expensive than lock-up.

Diversion programs cost \$60-150 a day versus \$300 a day for detention. Not to mention the cost of the lost future of each kid in lock-up...

In areas of the state with diversion programs in place, the results speak for themselves. One example is the City of Cambridge where police have established a diversion program for first-time offenders. Juvenile arrests are down 57% since the program began.

**But, not everyone has equal access to diversion programs.**

It all depends on where you live...

Some counties offer non-court options for kids who run into trouble, including restorative justice programs in many suburban towns.

Other counties, including Suffolk County, with large, low-income communities of color, have no formal pre-arraignment diversion program.



*Kids in detention sleep on "beds" like these in a locked room with strangers. Younger children with minor infractions can end up near older kids with more serious charges.*

Almost no county tracks outcomes for the kids they divert, and they don't keep track of whether they are offering these chances to all kids equally.

**You can help make diversion an option that is offered fairly to kids in all counties by donating to Citizens for Juvenile Justice today.**

Here at Citizens for Juvenile Justice, we are working day and night advocating for legislation and other reforms that would make evidence-driven, diversion programs available across Massachusetts.

*"Rather than providing a public safety benefit, processing a juvenile through the system appears to have a negative or backfire effect. This was especially true [when compared] with a diversion program."*

~ Research Review by the  
U.S. Department of Justice

But we're running out of time... The Legislature adjourns in July!

**I hope I can count on your support now to raise the money needed to push this bill across the finish line before July 31st.**

This legislation would mean fewer kids charged and incarcerated, more consistency across counties and courtrooms, and safer communities for us all.

With your generous support again today, we can pass this legislation and put the "justice" in the juvenile justice system.

Together, we can create a better future for all our kids.

Thank you so much for considering this request!

Most sincerely,

Naoka Carey  
Executive Director

P.S. If you believe classrooms are a better place for children than courtrooms, I hope you'll send a gift now! **With the legislative session ending in July, time is running out to ensure that children in Massachusetts have appropriate alternatives to court and lock-up.** Please respond today! Together, we can create brighter futures for kids and safer communities for us all. Thank you for your continued support!

## **Michael's Story: Arrest Record Destroys Plans to Serve His Country & Go to College, Despite Case Being Dismissed**

At fourteen, Michael got in a fight with his stepbrother. His mother and his sister couldn't break it up so they called the police.

Michael was arrested and charged with assault. After meeting him and hearing what happened, the judge dismissed the case.

Four years later, Michael graduated high school and applied to the National Guard. His father had been in the military and Michael was eager to follow in his footsteps. This was also the only way he could afford to go to college.

The Guard rejected Michael's application because he had a record.

He'd thought the slate was clean once the charges were dropped. But, the damage had already been done.

Like many kids, Michael is left with a record that will haunt him well into the future...

**It doesn't have to be  
like this. You can help.**

# Quiz Yourself on Juvenile Justice!

*Answer each of the following True or False...*

The vast majority of kids in the juvenile justice system commit low-level offenses like petty theft or minor fights. T / F

Most Massachusetts kids accused of crimes are found innocent or have their cases dismissed. T / F

Being arrested as a teenager makes you 8x more likely to drop out of high school. T / F

Kids of color make up two-thirds of those in juvenile detention. T / F

The majority of kids in juvenile detention suffer from depression or trauma. T / F

Massachusetts spends \$27 million a year on juvenile detention. T / F

A nationwide scorecard on juvenile records by the Juvenile Law Center ranked Massachusetts #40 out of 50 states. T / F

*Answers: All of these statistics are true.*

**Yes! I believe in high school diplomas, not handcuffs. Let's keep kids in class and out of the courts.**

I can help with a donation of:

\$250       \$100       \$50       \$25       \$\_\_\_\_\_

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**Citizens  
for  
Juvenile  
Justice**

**44 School Street, Suite 400  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108**

**[www.cfjj.org](http://www.cfjj.org) 617-338-1050**



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I have named Citizens for Juvenile Justice in my will.

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stamp  
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Please rush to:



**Citizens  
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Juvenile  
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**For keeping kids  
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