



Youth &
Community
Justice

California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice Supports Prop 57

Since its inception, the main priority of the California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice (CAYCJ) has been to eliminate the placement of children in the adult criminal justice system. Prop 57, which will be on the ballot this November, helps us get closer to this goal.

Gov. Jerry Brown has announced his support for the Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016. The measure will strengthen California's justice system and increase public safety by expanding rehabilitation in prisons and improving the process by which youth can be tried as adults.

Some key provisions of the ballot measure include the following:

- Requires judges, rather than prosecutors, to decide whether children as young as 14 years old should be tried as adults and sent to adult prison.
- Allows people convicted of a non-violent felony and sentenced to state prison to be eligible for parole consideration after completing the full term of their primary offense.
- Grants the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) the authority to award credits earned for good behavior, and rehabilitative or educational achievements.

The California Alliance for Youth and Community Justice (CAYCJ), a coalition of more than 40 juvenile justice policy advocacy organizations from around the state, has been specifically working on ending the detrimental practice of placing children in the adult criminal justice system for the past three years. Members of the Alliance worked to develop the Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016.

Since prosecutors began making decisions on whether a youth will be sent to the adult system in 2000, the number of children tried and sentenced as adults skyrocketed. Many studies show that youth sent to the adult system suffer greater trauma and abuse, have worse outcomes, and have higher suicide rates.

In 2014, the CAYCJ issued a report, *Treat Kids as Kids*, which detailed the harms of sending youth to the adult system. The report can be found at: <http://www.cayci.org/treat-kids.html>.