



Examples of State Divestment from Juvenile Justice Related Initiatives: Direct Cuts & Withheld Funding (2016 - current)

DISINVESTMENT
FROM JJ

Truancy

Historically, certain “status offenses” such as truancy and defiance of school rules -- known as Family With Special Needs (“FWSN”) cases -- were court matters, under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Branch. In 2016, the legislature concluded that FWSN cases would be better handled by schools and communities, without court involvement. The legislation was slated to go into effect in August 2017.

6 months prior to implementation of this legislation, the Judicial Branch faced significant budget rescissions. Because the above-mentioned reform would remove FWSN cases from the Judicial mandate, it made sense for that line item to be cut. However, the legislature did not preserve that funding in a different agency or line item. Instead, \$4 million previously committed to community-based services for youth and families struggling with truancy disappeared.

FWSN youth and their families faced drastically reduced services including educational advocacy and job readiness programs¹.

In response to this gap in services, the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee (“JJPOC”) created a Community Based Diversion Plan to address the needs of kids in the community who would previously have been referred to court for truancy. This plan included a \$3 million fiscal note in order to adequately fund implementation.

The plan was passed, but without any funding. Communities were expected to implement the changes using current appropriations only: no additional funds were granted, nor was the \$4 million that previously funded these services restored.

-\$4m

Juvenile Review Boards

Juvenile Review Boards (“JRB”) are a front-end, community-based diversion program designed to keep youth from entering court. They are widely seen to be one of the key reasons the size of the juvenile court has been shrinking over the past decade. In FY 2018 JRBs constituted \$1,263,263 across two line items. These funds covered 35 of the 85 JRBs operating across the state from the big cities, to suburbs, to rural towns.

Despite widespread consensus on the success and utility of the JRB system, funding for JRBs was one of the casualties that resulted when responsibility for committed delinquent youth was transferred from DCF to the Court Support Services Division (“CSSD”) of the Judicial Branch². Some federal dollars were found to piece together partial, one-time funding for some JRBs, but some communities were unable to maintain full programs and services. There is no plan for ongoing funding when Federal funds run out in mid 2019.

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Changes in Detention Law

National best practices indicate that children should only be detained pre-trial if they are a risk to public safety. In 2016, the CT legislature passed restrictions on the use of pre-trial detention, eliminated its use in cases where a child was either deemed a risk to themselves, or was in an unsafe home environment. As of January 1, 2017, only those youth who are a risk to others are detained.

¹ Source: FY 17 Judicial Branch CSSD Juvenile Services Reductions Summary

² Juvenile justice kids don’t exist in silos. (No kid/person does). DCF programs were serving youth under the children’s mental health, prevention, and juvenile justice mandate. Without appropriate reallocation of dollars that had been spent on CJTS and other DCF services for youth who were committed delinquent, critical programs ended.



The Department of Children and Families (DCF) agreed that youth who are a risk to themselves or in an unsafe home should not be detained, but instead need services. As the state agency responsible for these functions, youth who would previously have been detained would instead be DCF's responsibility. DCF testified, however, that in order to meet the needs of previously detained youth, their existing children's mental health and child protection services (suicide prevention/intervention, emergency shelter, human trafficking resources) would need to be expanded.

DCF was not allocated any funds to expand or create these services during the legislative sessions in 2016, 2017, or 2018.

Closing the Connecticut Juvenile Training School ("CJTS")

In 2015, the state spent \$53 million to run CJTS; the following year, the cost of running the facility fell to roughly \$33 million due to staffing changes that significantly reduced personnel. The Office of Policy and Management ("OPM") confirms that, of the nearly \$20 million in YoY cost savings, not one dollar was reinvested in programming and services that were a crucial part of the systemic preparation needed before CJTS was scheduled to close.

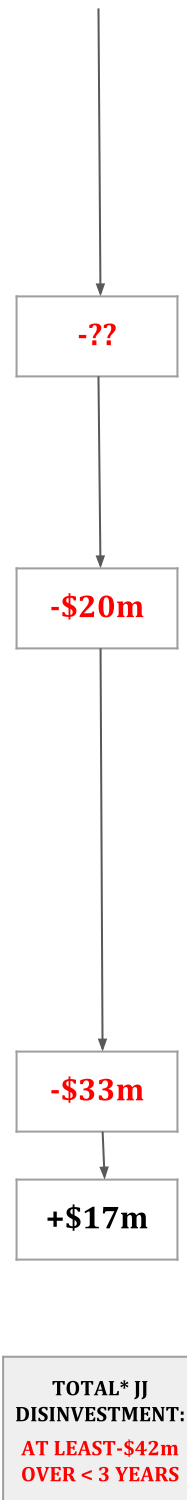
In 2017, the legislature determined that responsibility for CJTS would be transferred from DCF to CSSD in 2018, and swept line items from one agency to the other. This launched a 7-month dispute between the two agencies and OPM, each of whom had a different opinion on which dollars needed to be appropriated to DCF or CSSD.

CSSD asserted that an allocation of \$25 million was necessary for the agency to adequately take responsibility for the youth that had previously been served by DCF - those who were incarcerated at CJTS, in other residential programs, or on parole. These funds would be used to create/implement the appropriate scope/menu of services (both community and residential) needed in lieu of CJTS.

Despite the fact that the legislature had approved spending \$33 million to fund CJTS in 2016, and that CSSD's request could have largely been funded by the \$20 million saved between 2015 and 2016, CSSD was only given \$17 million.

As 2018 draws to a close, CSSD is serving youth who are a true risk to public safety and need a post-adjudication, hardware-secure setting. Due in part to the lack of funding described above, CSSD has as yet been unable to engage a nonprofit community contractor to provide a hardware-secure facility.

Until a permanent solution can be worked out, CSSD has repurposed separate units within the pre-trial detention facilities in Bridgeport and Hartford. This is a stop-gap solution that neither system insiders or advocates seen as an appropriate "solution."



*Please note: This is an estimated figure based on our understanding of the budgeting changes over the years, and our involvement with some of these unfulfilled requests. Each divestment is shown only once in order to reflect as simply as possible how much the cuts would represent of a single FY budget.