

MAJORITY MEMBERS:

MATTHEW G. MARTINEZ, CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN
DALE E. KILDEE, MICHIGAN
NITA M. LOWEY, NEW YORK
RON DE LUOGO, VIRGIN ISLANDS
WILLIAM D. FORD, MICHIGAN, EX OFFICIO

(202) 225-1850



MINORITY MEMBERS:

HARRIS W. FAWELL, ILLINOIS
F. THOMAS COLEMAN, MISSOURI
BILL BARRETT, NEBRASKA

136993

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND LABOR

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

B-346-C RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6106

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

HEARING ON THE RE-AUTHORIZATION OF THE
JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT OF 1974

Provision of Services to Girls and the
Juvenile Justice System

Monday, March 16, 1992 9:00AM

L.A. County Office of Education Board Room
Downey, CA

NCJRS
MAY 12 1992
ACQUISITIONS

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MATTHEW G. MARTINEZ

Good morning, and welcome. I am glad to be here today in my own district. To those of you who join us as participants this morning, I extend my personal gratitude. And to those of you who join us as observers, I thank you sincerely for your interest in this very important issue. We are here today for one in a series of hearings on the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, which as you may know, is scheduled to expire this year.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act – known in short as the JJDP Act – authorizes a broad range of activities to prevent and treat the delinquent behavior of at-risk youth. This highly successful program has been responsible for a significant drop in the number of youth who are inappropriately held in detention, and has reduced the number of juveniles in adult jails and lockups.

136993

**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by
Public Domain/Comm. on Education
& Labor/U.S. Dept. of Justice /
U.S. House of Representatives
to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.

~~The Act has aided in developing innovative and highly effective programs such as family preservation services and public-private partnerships which aid in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Youths have been redirected from delinquent behavior and detention centers into programs that provide specialized services in family or community based programs.~~

In today's hearing, we are going to address female delinquency and the provision of services to girls under the JJDPA. Girls committing juvenile crimes and offenses are often ignored even though they account for a significant percentage of juvenile delinquent population. However, they generally commit different crimes than boys – crimes where the girls are more a threat to themselves than they are to the community. A high percentage of girls committing delinquent offenses are committing status offenses such as running away, anti-social behavior and cutting school. In fact, studies show that one fifth of girls arrested are arrested for simply running away, and even though there are four times more arrests of boys than girls every year, girls account for 56 percent of the arrests for running away, and 33 percent of the arrests for curfew violation.

Even though there is a difference in types of offenses committed between boys and girls, on the whole we are not providing specialized services for girls in the juvenile justice system. Therefore they are receiving less and unequal treatment than boys receive once they are arrested. Girls are committing juvenile offenses, but they are not getting services to prevent those offenses or to rehabilitate them.

We treat our female juvenile delinquents differently than we treat our boys. We try to protect them. If a young woman has run away and the authorities think she is being sexually or physically abused in the home, they won't return her to her home. But they don't want to turn her out onto the streets where she can be exploited. Without any programs for girls, there is only one alternative. The authorities put her into juvenile detention with a valid court order

~~to protect her. And we keep her there longer than we would any boy. Why? Why are there~~
no other alternatives than youth jail for her?

Our juvenile services have been developed to protect the community from violent young boys. Girls who are hurting themselves through their juvenile offenses are not getting served. Instead these girls are being locked up.

In the last 20 years this country has made several big steps towards ridding the system of large gender inequalities. But that is not true in the juvenile justice system. And the inequality of services for boys and girls that they encounter at a young age is something that will effect their development and outlook for the rest of their lives.

Historically people have thought of "juvenile delinquents" as boys -- young hooligans creating trouble in the community. And many of the programs address the problems connected with male delinquency. But there is a large number of girl delinquents out there as well, and we need to gear our juvenile justice programs to address their needs and the causes of their delinquency the same way that we address boys needs.

This system should not be one that keeps girls in detention longer because we don't have any rehabilitation programs for them. This system should not be one that puts girls into detention because we don't have any programs to put them into to keep from putting them back into their abusive home. This system should no longer ignore female delinquency and girls services.

Our witnesses today will address different aspects of this issue. Our first panel is comprised of Dr. Libby Deschenes of the Rand Corporation, and Ms. Rita Redaelli from Girls, Inc., who will give us a national perspective on girls and juvenile justice. Testifying in the

~~second panel are three young women who have first hand experience with delinquency and the juvenile justice system. Finally we have two representatives who have administrated programs which target services girls at risk of delinquency.~~

I look forward to all of your testimony. I think that my colleague Congressman Barrett and I, along with the rest of Congress and the rest of this country, have a lot to learn about girls and delinquency. We have ignored the problem and inequity until now, but I hope that this hearing will signal the beginning of the end of that ignorance.

I will turn now to Mr. Barrett.