

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM ACT IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION

JJRAIC FACT SHEET

Background

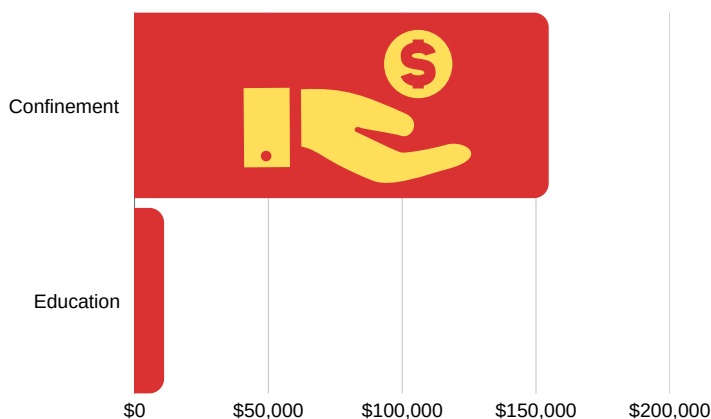
The Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Commission (JJRAIC) was established under Act 1225 of 2003 (Act 1225) which passed in response to demands for change by Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC) and other advocates. The need for reform was spurred by horrific stories of abuse in youth prisons in Louisiana, including broken bones, black eyes, sexual assault, and sadly, a child dying at the hands of a guard.

Act 1225 was a call to action to fix our broken youth justice system, a critical piece of legislation put in place to resolve historical and systemic injustice and end abuses of youth in the justice system in Louisiana. The JJRAIC is a vital part of this ongoing work. Though the JJRAIC was not operational for several years, it began to meet again in 2021 and work in subcommittees to provide oversight to carry out the law that is supposed to transform the system, coordinate services, and protect our children. Since then, progress has been slow and moderate despite a public celebration of its 20 year anniversary in 2023.

The Issue

Act 1225 gave the JJRAIC the responsibility of the "continued reform" of youth justice laws. But, nearly twenty years later, our system is still ineffective, expensive, and harming generations of children.

Since 2003, youth populations in OJJ have plummeted to about 16% of the youth population. But OJJ is still holding 80% of the funds.



In Louisiana it **can cost \$155K/year to imprison a child**, but we spend only **\$11K/year for public education**.



FFLIC

JJRAIC FACT SHEET

In 2020 FFLIC, along with partners, strategically pushed a law to be added as the Vice-Chair of the JJRAIC and called for the JJRAIC to meet four times a year, beginning in January of 2021. Before that, the JJRAIC had not met since 2016. However, the JJRAIC has continued to face challenges, including: lack of consistent meetings and authentic participation, information-sharing from its state partners, under-utilization of the expertise of the JJRAIC and its members, and hesitancy to fully employ the powers of the Commission. In early 2025, the JJRAIC took an important step by approving subcommittee bylaws—creating a stronger structure to support coordinated and accountable reform. But perhaps the most powerful part of these meetings is the testimony provided by families directly impacted by incarceration, who show up to advocate for change and share their experiences of the harm, instability, and lack of services their children have faced and continue to face.

In the past few years, FFLIC has been working with the JJRAIC to restructure its work to accomplish its mandates to:

- Convene. The JJRAIC is mandated to meet four times a year.
- Propose legislation and resolutions to protect young people.
- Utilize the services of the legislature.
- Conduct or request a study.
- Ask for data or assistance from state agencies.
- Get involved in legal matters, such as issuing subpoenas, with a majority vote.
- Create a single state entity for providing services to children and families.
- Review budgets of state agencies and entities.
- Identify and evaluate state delinquency programs, and law enforcement practices and relationships.
- Review and comment on the Governor's Children's Cabinet report.
- Report to the Governor's office.

Solution: THE JJRAIC MUST COMMIT TO CHANGE

Act 1225 was a critical piece of legislation to resolve historical and systemic injustice and abuses in the youth justice system in Louisiana. We must continue to leverage the power of the Commission to implement its mandates. Now, more than ever, it's vital to envision the possibilities of a just system.

Imagine if the JJRAIC fulfilled its promises of Act 1225. *Imagine if...*

- ✓ We released all youth so that they are in their communities at home with their families receiving support.
- ✓ We had transitional support that includes access to housing, health care, and food.
- ✓ We invested in alternatives to incarceration to rehabilitate children.
- ✓ We changed the way our state and society approaches crime among our youth.
- ✓ We shifted school funding from school resource offices to counselors, peace builders, and positive behavior interventions support and discipline.
- ✓ We ceased any and all tactics, tools or activities that intentionally or unintentionally seek to disproportionately contain, control, and terrorize youth.
- ✓ We had a coordinated system of care to protect children instead of punish them.

FFLIC will work to fulfill the promises of Act 1225 to care for our youth and families, and to ensure youth justice reform! The map and research for the JJRAIC is available at www.fflic.org.



FFLIC