



October 14, 2020

Representative Mary Gay Scanlon  
1535 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Kelly Armstrong  
1004 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Scanlon and Armstrong:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) would like to thank you for introducing the “Justice for Juveniles Act” and we applaud the House of Representatives on the passage of the bill. This legislation will better protect youth, including those with disabilities, from abuse in America’s prisons by exempting them from the requirements of the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA).

NDRN is the voluntary membership association for Protection and Advocacy (P&A) and Client Assistance Program (CAP) agencies. The P&A and CAP agencies are a nationwide network of congressionally mandated, cross disability organizations operating in every state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the US Virgin Islands). There is also a P&A and CAP affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations located in the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

NDRN and the P&A network understand what children and youth with disabilities encounter within the juvenile justice system. P&As work with children and youth with disabilities on the front end of the juvenile justice system, and also maintain a presence in the facilities in which children are confined, including prisons, jails, and detention centers. There is still an urgent need to protect children and youth with disabilities from unnecessary incarceration and when detention is necessary it is imperative that youth are protected from abuse. NDRN outlined some of our concerns and recommendations regarding youth in detention in our 2019 report [“Probation Referral: A Model for Diversion of Children and Youth with Disabilities from the Juvenile Justice System”](#). Exempting youth from the requirements of the PLRA will allow youth who are harmed or in danger of harm in correctional settings to seek legal redress without unnecessary delays and without the requirement to navigate complex internal grievance procedures.

Again, NDRN applauds the introduction and passage of this important piece of legislation and your leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you to enact the "Justice for Juveniles Act" into law. We strongly urge the Senate to take up this piece of legislation immediately in order to protect youth in detention. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Cyrus Huncharek, Public Policy Analyst, at [cyrus.huncharek@ndrn.org](mailto:cyrus.huncharek@ndrn.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Curtis L. Decker", is displayed within a white rectangular box.

Curtis L. Decker  
Executive Director

CC: Speaker Pelosi  
Minority Leader McCarthy  
Leader McConnell  
Minority Leader Schumer  
Chairman Graham, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Ranking Member Feinstein, Senate Judiciary Committee