

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE REGARDING CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

WHEREAS, an estimated 1.5 million children in the United States have an incarcerated mother or father¹; and

WHEREAS, since 1991 the number of children with an incarcerated mother has increased 98% and the rate of incarcerated fathers has increased by 58%²; and

WHEREAS, many children of incarcerated parents have a strong bond or natural attachment with them; and

WHEREAS, parental incarceration creates additional challenges for children and families; and

WHEREAS, effectively engaging and including incarcerated parents in the lives of their children when in the best interest of the child is complex and requires the collaboration of system stakeholders, such as prisons or other detention facilities, and application of scarce resources by multiple entities; and

WHEREAS, NCJFCJ supports the well-being of children of incarcerated parents and supports courts in developing policy and practice that fosters resilience in children of incarcerated parents; and

WHEREAS, NCJFCJ recognizes that incarcerated parents have the same rights as non-incarcerated parents to access to justice and the same rights to develop, maintain and improve the bond and relationship with their children; and

WHEREAS, NCJFCJ develops and disseminates technical assistance resources and provides training to courts across the country; and

WHEREAS, NCJFCJ promotes the exercise of judicial leadership to convene stakeholders to improve and enhance system responses to the needs of all children,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

NCJFCJ applauds the goals of the White House initiative regarding children of incarcerated parents and supports advancing efforts to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents.

NCJFCJ stands ready to assist juvenile and family courts in efforts to ensure children build healthy and supportive relationships with their parents who are incarcerated.

NCJFCJ recognizes that developing and/or disseminating training and technical assistance resources to courts across the country to improve outcomes for children of incarcerated parents is of great importance and urges the Administration and Congress to support this work.

NCJFCJ supports efforts to establish funding for programs that will enable judges and other justice system professionals to respond appropriately and effectively to the myriad needs of children of incarcerated parents.

¹ Mumola, C. (2000). *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Incarcerated Parents and Their Children*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

² *ibid.*