

DIVERSION OF, AND PROGRAMS FOR, JUVENILE STATUS OFFENDERS

Approved by the American Bar Association House of Delegates, August 2007

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association urges state, local, territorial, and tribal jurisdictions to pass laws and support policies and programs that divert alleged juvenile status offenders from court jurisdiction that:

- (1) Mandate the development and implementation of targeted evidence-based programs that provide juvenile, family-focused, and strength-based early intervention and pre-court prevention services and treatment to alleged juvenile status offenders and their families; and
- (2) Promote the development of gender-responsive programs, treatment, and services for alleged juvenile status offenders.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association urges Congress to make the availability of federal funds contingent on compliance with the following requirements related to juvenile status offenders:

- (1) Articulate minimum guidelines with which states, territories, and tribal jurisdictions must comply in implementing early intervention and diversion programs for alleged juvenile status offenders. These programs should be evidence-based, gender-responsive, family and youth-focused and attempt to exhaust voluntary treatment and services to avoid court involvement and out-of-home placement;
- (2) Expand and support the ability of state, local, territorial, and tribal youth-serving social service agencies to be a timely first responder to situations involving juvenile status offenders and provide effective services and treatment to both alleged and adjudicated juvenile status offenders; and
- (3) Promote community-based services to alleged and adjudicated status offenders and families in their homes, communities, or in respite, foster, group, or staff-secure settings, if necessary for the protection and safety of the juvenile.