

JUVENILE JUSTICE

(adopted 1981, reviewed 2000)

We believe: There should be some authority in the Juvenile Justice Law to oversee its implementation.

- Juveniles are entitled to the same basic rights as adults. These include the right to an attorney, to bail, to cross examination, but not to trial by jury.
- Certain first and minor offenders should be diverted from the court system, and their problems handled by the community.
- The law should provide facilities and personnel for mentally and emotionally disturbed juveniles as well as for problems arising from alcohol and drug abuse.

Families in Conflict

- The primary responsibility for raising children rests with the family. When the child is in danger to himself or society, the state must intervene and provide resources to the family. The goal of such services should be to reunite the family.
- When the state intervenes in a family crisis, the family should be fiscally responsible according to their ability to pay.
- When a law enforcement officer takes a runaway youth into custody and determines that the youth needs a DSHS placement, DSHS should be immediately responsible for this youth. Thurston County should have a semi-secure facility for runaways.
- Law enforcement officers should be able to refer the chronic runaway to secure facility for 24 hours.

Dependency/Termination of Parent's Rights:

- A child should be removed from the home when the child is abused or neglected or living in circumstances, which constitute a danger of substantial damage to the child's psychological or physical development.
- Foster care should be used as a temporary placement. Parents rights should be terminated and adoption proceedings begun when all reasonable services provided have faded to correct the family's deficiencies.
- There should be in-service training for teachers and other professionals to recognize and report abused children. There should also exist education programs at all school levels to help children identify and deal with abusive behavior towards them.

Truancy. Schools should be responsible for developing education programs to meet the varied needs of truants.