



The Independent Voice for Kentucky's Children

KENTUCKY  
YOUTH  
ADVOCATES

**Press Release**

For Immediate Release:

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**HB 123 Passes House Judiciary Committee Unanimously;  
Placed on the Consent Calendar  
Kentucky Moves Forward To Stop Locking Up Kids for Skipping School and Running Away  
From Home and Reinvest the Cost Savings**

**Statement by Tara Grieshop-Goodwin, Deputy Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates**

**Jeffersontown, KY** – “To bring Kentucky’s handling of our youth charged with status offenses in line with evidence-based best practices, HB 123 reduces the use of incarceration and ensures appropriate steps are taken prior to filing charges against the child. We thank Representative Kelly Flood for championing this important legislation and Chairman John Tilley for his critical support. We commend the members of the House Judiciary Committee for voting to help our youth become contributing citizens.

Kentucky detains youth charged with status offenses such as skipping school or running away **at the second highest rate in the nation**. Children who are charged with status offenses need attention to the underlying problems that are causing them to act out, and need opportunities to learn from their mistakes so they can make a successful transition into adulthood. They do not belong in a jail cell next to youth who have committed serious acts.

A wide body of research shows that locking children up for status offenses is ineffective and actually increases a youth’s chance of becoming involved in criminal activity as an adult. Yet, counties across the state paid close to \$1 million in 2010 to lock up youth who committed status offenses. Kentucky can do a better job of guiding our youth to a successful adulthood while at the same time increasing public safety.

With HB 123, a priority on the Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children, the Commonwealth is on the path to achieving its vision of every child becoming a self-sufficient, productive adult.”

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**Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.