



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Deal Names Top DJJ Advisors to State Steering Committee Governor Launches Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

(ATLANTA - GA) Gov. Nathan Deal and the Georgia Criminal Justice Reform Council today announced the formation of the State Steering Committee for the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The committee, which will consist of juvenile court judges and individuals from relevant state organizations, will work on expanding this reform effort to counties throughout Georgia.

"The Casey Foundation has a proven, data-driven method for helping communities find alternatives to the need for detention among our youth—which complements our juvenile justice reforms already underway and receiving national attention," Governor Deal said. "Clayton County has shown how well this initiative can work in Georgia, and we intend to spread the process to other parts of the state," said Deal.

The Governor named three current members of the Department of Juvenile Justice Team to serve on the new Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The Honorable Judge Steven C. Teske serves as a Judicial Advisory Council Member to the DJJ Board. Avery D. Niles is Commissioner of Georgia's Department of Juvenile Justice. And Joe Vignati is DJJ's Deputy Commissioner of Community Services.

JDAI is a national initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation working on a county-by-county basis to encourage appropriate community support for low-risk youth offenders to enhance public safety and help misguided young people while conserving taxpayer dollars. According to foundation research, communities participating in JDAI have lowered the number of youth in juvenile detention by 44-percent. The initial Georgia project expansion will take place in multiple counties, to be determined through a collaboration with the Casey Foundation. The following professional members have been named to the Governor's new state steering committee:

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JDAI Steering Committee Membership:

Judge Steven Teske, chairman and Criminal Justice Reform Council member

Judge Brad Boyd, Fulton County Juvenile Court chief

Judge John Sumner, president of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges

Judge Leroy Burke, III, presiding Chatham County Juvenile Court judge

Eric John, executive director of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges

Avery D. Niles, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

Joe Vignati, deputy commissioner for Community Services for Department of Juvenile Justice

Joe Hood, division director of public safety for the Office of Planning and Budget

Carey Miller, policy advisor for the Governor's Office

Colin Slay, chief of staff for Clayton County Juvenile Court

Adolphus Graves, chief probation officer for Fulton County Juvenile Court

Georgia's steering committee will operate under the authority of the Criminal Justice Reform Council and work with communities to provide council members with recommendations for potential changes in policy and legislation.

DJJ Commissioner Avery D. Niles says data indicates the suggested juvenile justice system improvements will result in a reduction of young offenders requiring detention. "Juvenile justice reform in Georgia has shown us we can achieve many of the JDAI goals by redirecting low-risk troubled youth to effective alternatives and by modifying other juvenile justice practices to achieve better outcomes," said Commissioner Niles.

Working in partnership with the state, the Casey Foundation will fund a coordinator position to assist Georgia in the Detention Alternatives effort. The coordinator will help the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and the JDAI Steering Committee manage a JDAI model plan for additional sites; assist local groups with the development and implementation of viable alternatives to detention; and provide the council and steering committee with periodic reports and progress updates.

Counties in 40 states are participating in the Casey Foundation's JDAI initiative. Georgia's new steering committee members will attend a JDAI Intersite Conference in Phoenix, Arizona this September to develop additional insight into the process.

(END RELEASE)

"Juvenile Justice Reform is working!"

Avery D. Niles, DJJ Commissioner