

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 18–
Committee on Judiciary

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Directing the
Legislative Commission to conduct an interim study of the
juvenile justice system in Nevada.

WHEREAS, The juvenile court system was created in the United States in the early 20th century on the philosophy that children are inherently different from adults and that states should take on the responsibility of protecting and rehabilitating young offenders; and

WHEREAS, The fundamental difference between the juvenile justice system and the criminal justice system is that rehabilitation is considered to be the primary goal for young offenders and, despite actual declines in youth crime rates, research indicates an increasing emphasis on punishment and detention and a decreasing emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, Institutionalization of young offenders has proven expensive and Nevada spends an average of \$95 to \$105 per day, or almost \$40,000 per year, on each such offender, which is more than four times the cost of full-time enrollment at a state university for 1 year; and

WHEREAS, Serious concerns have been raised regarding the resources available to rehabilitate young offenders and the quality of supervision and treatment of such youth in state juvenile correctional facilities; and

WHEREAS, The Legislative Commission's Subcommittee to Study the System of Juvenile Justice in Nevada (A.C.R. 13, Statutes of Nevada 1999) identified numerous areas of concern and recommended that the 2001 Legislature create a statutory committee to continue its study of the juvenile justice system, but this committee was not created; and

WHEREAS, Because the Legislature is responsible for funding the State's juvenile justice system and addressing the needs of young offenders, continued study of the juvenile justice system will assist the Legislature in making informed decisions concerning such funding and care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the Legislative Commission is hereby directed to appoint a committee consisting of three members of the Assembly and three members of the Senate who are representative of the various geographical areas of this state to conduct an interim study of the juvenile justice system in Nevada; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study must include, without limitation, consideration of:

1. A coordinated continuum of care wherein a broad array of community-based program and service options are combined to ensure that health services, substance abuse treatment, education, training and care are compatible with each youth's specific needs;

2. Individualized supervision, care and treatment to accommodate the individual needs and potential of the youth and his family, and treatment programs which integrate such youth into situations of living and interacting that are consistent with a healthy, stable and family-like environment;

3. Aftercare and reintegration wherein youth continue to receive the support of treatment services following their active rehabilitation in a facility to prevent the relapse or regression of progress achieved during the recovery process;

4. Overrepresentation and disparate treatment of minority youth in the juvenile justice system, including a review of the various places where bias may influence decisions concerning minority youth;

5. Gender specific services, including programs that consider female development in their design and implementation and that address girls' needs, including victimization and abuse issues, substance abuse, mental health and educational needs, and vocational and skills training that may provide a meaningful life and livable wage following release;

6. Quality of care in state facilities, including staff qualifications and training, documentation of agency and facility performance, coordination and collaboration of agencies, availability of services relating to mental health, substance abuse, education, vocational training, and treatment of sexual offenders and violent offenders, and the feasibility and necessity for independent monitoring of state facilities; and

7. Programs utilized by different states such as Missouri which has developed a system of community-based residential and non-residential programs that allow young offenders to be placed in more specialized programs according to their needs and which has produced recidivism rates as low as 11 percent; and be it further

RESOLVED, That any recommended legislation proposed by the committee must be approved by a majority of the members of the Assembly and a majority of the members of the Senate appointed to the committee; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Legislative Commission shall submit a report of the results of the study and any recommendations for legislation to the 73rd Session of the Nevada Legislature.