Every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential—even if they make a mistake while growing up. Second chances are important as children learn and grow into adulthood. However, for far too many youth, one mistake may drastically change their futures. This is why PTA has long advocated for family and community-based alternatives to children entering the juvenile justice system and is pleased that Congress reauthorized the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) in 2018.

### THE DATA

Over **45,000** juvenile offenders were held in detention centers in 2016 according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [1]

Low and medium-risk youth placed in detention centers are **twice** as likely to reoffend as those placed in restorative justice programs [2]

It costs an average of **$146,302** per year to hold one juvenile in confinement [3]

### WE ADVOCATE TO

Keep children that commit minor offenses—such as skipping school—out of juvenile detention facilities by offering restorative justice alternatives, such as community, school or family-focused interventions.

Continue to engage parents and families in the delivery of treatment and services while their child is in the juvenile justice system.

Ensure states implement newly enacted policies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Encourage schools to use positive school discipline policies that are effective, fair and consistently implemented to keep students in school and learning instead of relying on exclusionary practices such as in and out-of-school suspensions.
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

When Will Wiese heard that the Missouri state legislature had introduced a bill that would protect minors from being prosecuted as adults and serving time in adult facilities, he knew he had to take action to ensure the bill would be passed into law. Will knew that without this piece of legislation, a child as young as nine years old could be held in jail—with an adult offender in the same cell.

As a former Student Representative and current Advocacy Chair for Missouri PTA, Will knew the power of social media to create change in communities. Will created a social media campaign around the Raise the Age Missouri Act, using the hashtag #18in18 to build traction for the bill in Missouri.

The grassroots movement that began as a small online conversation quickly grew, and by the end of 2017, there were hundreds of #18in18 social media posts from school officials, parents and students. In May 2018, the Missouri state legislature passed SB 793 by a nearly unanimous vote and in June, the Raise the Age Missouri Act was signed into law by the Governor.

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) is the nation’s main law governing the juvenile justice system and protections for youth in the system. The JJDPA requires states to comply with four core requirements, including requirements to remove children from adult jails and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. The JJDPA was reauthorized by Congress in 2018.

