

The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Department of Justice
284 Wellington Street
Room EMB 5240
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0H8

RE: Youth Criminal Justice Act

Dear, Ms. Wilson-Raybould

I am writing to you today about the Youth Criminal Justice Act and how it is not adequately effective for the youth. It needs improvement on its effectiveness for adolescents in our society as the amendments that have been enforced by the Parliament in 2012 need revision and modification.

My main concern is with the federal government and how they need to increase funding for programs to prevent crimes, improve extrajudicial interventions and punishments, as well as advocating for youth crime research to really get to the bottom of why these adolescents are behaving delinquently in order to make significant improvement towards the YCJA.

The drawbacks of the Youth Criminal Justice Act involves the continuous and routined use of extrajudicial measures on juveniles as forms of punishment used to prevent crime. These forms of punishment that are repeatedly used include; reprimand, supervision orders and attendance orders. Although these are important ways of communicating to the youth that they are being disciplined, they are not sanctions that are successful enough to alter their home and family dynamics to ensure that this type of activity is not replicated. Statistics have shown that the majority of children who come in contact with the law are from the child welfare system which means that they are experiencing neglect in the way they are being raised which is affecting their behaviour within society. I think these forms of punishment should be altered to incorporate more involvement within the community so that children who come from dysfunctional families can develop an understanding of how people in a community should behave within society. Extrajudicial measures should use punishments to their advantage and incorporate some type of therapy at the same time in order to take into consideration the youths background as to why they are committing crimes at such a young age.

These measures could be improved by changing them to offer continuous counselling sessions with a professional as opposed to just signing a piece of paper used in an attendance order.

Volunteer work at a homeless shelter or within a community to develop life skills while learning about family and partnership as opposed to just being supervised for a couple hours in a supervision order. Parent therapy and/or involvement with the child to ensure the parents of these children are understanding what their child is going through and how to handle delinquent behaviour is important to help build a bond between the child and the parent in order to work towards improving behaviours, as opposed to reprimand where they just hear a quick lecture from a judge and call it a lesson.

I am confident to say that these changes in the Youth Criminal Justice Act would impact the legislation and society in a very positive way. Making these changes are important to ensure a decline in criminal activity from the youth in our society, it is obvious to say that these young people are the future and with a dysfunctioning youth can lead to a chaotic future. It is important for the federal government to use their funds to advocate for research to be put into youth crimes and work towards discovering all the reasons youth act delinquently within our society even sometimes after receiving punishments already and to use this data to apply it to make changes towards the Youth Criminal Justice Act. The extrajudicial punishments mentioned above could all be used as forms of research by observing the children during therapy and also with guardian interactions. Parent and child interactions would be something that needs more focus on within the home and child welfare communities because of the obvious fact that adolescents who have had encounters with mistreatment associated with abuse and neglect has high influence on their social behavior. Research can be done through surveys, interviews, therapy etc. All of these factors need to be taken into consideration in order to improve the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

I wrote this letter to you Ms. Wilson-Raybould because I know you have power within the department of justice and the federal government to help make these changes towards the Youth Criminal Justice Act. I urge that you take this letter into deep consideration in order to establish a better youth for our society leading up to a better future. As a social work student I can confidently say that a change towards extrajudicial punishment in the forms of which I explained is strongly needed in order to acknowledge the background of these children and why they are behaving the way that they are.

Thank you for the time you took to read this letter and I strongly encourage you to help in making a change that will be beneficial to our youth and to our society as a whole.

Sincerely,
Leana Ayoub

Major Assignment Part 2 - Advocacy Piece

The Youth Criminal Justice Act

Leana Ayoub 101091627

Professor: Beth Martin

Introduction to Social Welfare SOWK1001

Due: December 6th, 2019

SECTION B

The reason I wrote this letter to the honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould is because the Youth Criminal Justice Act needs significant improvement in order to be properly effective in our society. The Youth Criminal Justice Act is deeply behind in its way of dealing with punishments to prevent crime through extrajudicial measures. The punishments that are being used towards the youth are ineffective in preventing future crime because they don't deal with the youth in a compassionate and healing way, instead they give a quick lecture or supervise them for a couple hours a week. These punishments have no care to understand what these children are going through everyday that is making them act delinquently.

I wrote to Ms. Wilson-Raybould because she has the power and capability to encourage change within the department of justice and the federal government to acknowledge this issue and help to make a change by working towards improving extrajudicial punishments in making them more effective using counselling/volunteer work etc and by increasing funds into research to grasp a better understanding of the youth in our society and why they are behaving abnormally. This change towards the YCJA is important to ensure a better future for our youth and for our society as a whole.

References

Graham, J. R., Delaney, R., & Shier, M. L. (2017). *Canadian social policy: a new introduction*. Ontario: Pearson Education Canada.

Department of Justice. (2017, August 8). The Youth Criminal Justice Act Summary and Background. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/yj-jj/tools-outils/back-hist.html>.

Canada, S. (2019, September 6). Government of Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/prime-ministers-youth-council/council.html>.

Kolivoski, K. M., Goodkind, S., & Shook, J. J. (2017). Social Justice for Crossover Youth: The Intersection of the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems. *Social Work*, 62(4), 313-321. Retrieved from <https://academic-oup-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/sw/article/62/4/313/4056505>