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**Juvenile  
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Center**

**Juveniles 4 Justice urges the federal government to create legislation to reduce the use of manual restraints in juvenile placement facilities**

### **Reality about Restraints:**

- In 2006, 28 states reported at least one death in their juvenile facilities. Many of the deaths were due to restraint use.
- Through focus groups, Juveniles 4 Justice (J4J) has collected stories from youth who have experienced or witnessed the improper use of restraints. Youth described staff members at juvenile justice facilities pushing residents hard enough against concrete floors or walls during restraints to result in injuries severe enough to require immediate medical attention.
- Youth in J4J focus groups also described staff members using restraints to respond to non-violent behaviors such as talking out of turn, or talking back to staff members.
- Many youth who have experienced restraints and suffered maltreatment at the hands of correction officers have said that these experiences have lasting emotional impacts such as flashbacks and extreme anxiety.
- According to a report by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), there are significant gaps in data collection regarding child maltreatment and deaths related to restraint use.
- The GAO states that many state agencies lack the oversight and monitoring necessary to keep youth safe in juvenile justice facilities. Some juvenile justice agencies are exempt from licensing requirements, putting youth at greater risk for maltreatment.
- Successful state experiments with alternatives to restraint use demonstrate the opportunities to manage children effectively in juvenile justice settings while severely limiting physical tactics.

### **Legislative Proposals:**

- Require states to create an outside monitoring system to supervise juvenile justice facilities and to report on the misuses of restraints
- Require states to maintain an efficient tracking system to measure the use of restraints in juvenile facilities
- Require states to provide staff with training techniques for behavior management addressing escalating behavior without the use of restraints
- Require states to develop policies that address the appropriate use of restraints for males and females.
- Ban the use of prone restraint in all placement facilities
- Provide funding to states that institute the above reforms.

Source:

Brown, K. E., (2008). Residential facilities: State and federal oversight gaps may increase risk to youth well-being. United States Government Accountability Office Report.