

Senator Caswell offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 186.

A resolution to commemorate October 2014 as Youth Justice Awareness Month in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, The historical role of the juvenile justice system is to rehabilitate and treat youth while holding them accountable for their actions and maintaining public safety. It is, therefore, acknowledged that, when possible, keeping youth within their families, homes, and communities is a best practice; and

Whereas, Youth are developmentally different from adults, and these differences are documented by research on the adolescent brain and acknowledged by many state and federal laws that treat youth disparately based upon their age and stage of development; and

Whereas, Most laws allowing the prosecution of youth as adults were enacted prior to evidence produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention that demonstrate that about 70 to 80 percent of youth treated in a punitive, nontherapeutic program will reoffend; and

Whereas, It is estimated that over 70 percent of children in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health condition, of which 30 percent have a serious emotional disturbance; and

Whereas, Youth detained or involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system should be kept in the least restrictive setting possible, with family inclusion and services provided to aid in treatment; and

Whereas, 200,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year in the United States, and most of the youth are prosecuted for nonviolent offenses; and

Whereas, Youth with criminal records face hurdles with regard to education and employment; and

Whereas, Moving a youth from the adult criminal justice system into community-based services or to the juvenile justice system is more cost-effective; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we hereby commemorate October 2014 as Youth Justice Awareness Month in the state of Michigan.