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DATE: May 26, 2009

TO: Members of Joint Finance Committee

FROM: Jim Moeser, Deputy Director  
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

RE: Youth Aids Allocations – Juvenile Corrections, Paper # 302

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The Governor's budget proposes that the Youth Aids allocation to counties to help support needed juvenile delinquency prevention and early intervention programming at the local level, reduced initially by the 1% reduction applied to all departments but then an additional reduction of approximately 5%. While there is a reference in the proposal to allow use of federal ARRA funds, no specific funds are identified and the decision related to use is delegated to DOA.

While there are concerns about the Youth Aids calculations overall and while counties have committed an increasing share of the funds that go toward delinquency services, the Youth Aids concept has served Wisconsin well by promoting the development of community-based programs for at-risk youth who may otherwise commit more crimes and end up being placed in a Juvenile Correctional Institution. Further erosions in that funding, coupled with modest increases in the daily rates for juvenile correctional services, undermines the intent of Youth Aids as well as the ability of the counties to serve delinquent youth more appropriately at the local level.

Therefore, we urge the Joint Finance Committee to select Alternative 2 in the LFB paper. This alternative calls for the restoration of both the initial 1% reduction as well as the larger 5% reduction. At a minimum, the committee should limit the reduction in Youth Aids funding to no more than 1%.