

## **Shackling and Courtroom Safety**

**In jurisdictions that limit juvenile shackling, order and safety are maintained.**

- Miami-Dade County limited juvenile shackling in 2006. Since then more than 25,000 children have appeared in the county's juvenile court without injury or escape. (Source: Miami-Dade Public Defender)
- The Children's Court Division of Albuquerque, NM has limited shackling for 12 years and seen no escapes and only three incidents of children "acting out in court." (Source: *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, Spring 2015)
- Clayton County Georgia has had no escapes or violence in more than a year of limiting shackling. At times an additional deputy has been stationed outside the court since the change. However, that deputy has never been called upon to act, as there have been no incidents. (Source: Sheriff Victor Hill & deputies.)
- In New Orleans Parish, Louisiana, security staffing was *reduced* after shackling reform due to budget cuts. The parish conducts roughly 4,000 juvenile hearings a year and has had no incidents. (Source: Louisiana Center for Children's Rights)
- In Maricopa County, Arizona, nearly 2,500 detained youth have appeared in court since the county began limiting shackling. The court remains safe, and there have been no escapes. (Source: Maricopa County Public Defender)
- Connecticut limited shackling in 2015. After 1,500 youth had come through the court, 94 percent of them unshackled, there was only one escape attempt. The youth walked out of court and later that day turned himself in. (Source: State of Connecticut Judicial Branch.)

### **Judges report courts function better when shackling is limited.**

- Judge Susan Ashley, New Hampshire: "Automatically restraining a juvenile in the courtroom deprives that young person of the opportunity to show the court they are capable of self-control ... A juvenile coming into the courtroom free from physical restraint can experience confidence in his or her ability to maintain good behavior in the community."
- Judge Darlene Byrne, Texas: "I see my courtroom as a place of safety. Youth probably behave better, are better listeners and are more engaged in the court process when they remain unshackled. Indiscriminate shackling of juveniles is inconsistent with the rehabilitative purpose of the juvenile justice system."
- Judge Jay Blitzman, Massachusetts: "(Limiting shackling) has not adversely affected the flow of business one iota. But it has improved the atmosphere and the culture of the courtroom. When a child can turn and actually say 'hello,' and you see somebody smile back, that changes things for the child and the family member. It also makes it easier for the management of the courtroom."

# CAMPAIGN AGAINST INDISCRIMINATE JUVENILE SHACKLING

This report was written by Colleen Shaddox, a consultant for the Campaign Against Indiscriminate Juvenile Shackling, in January, 2016. She conducted phone or email interviews with the sources noted in the text. The exception is the Albuquerque outcome report, which originally came from *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, Spring 2015, and was confirmed later by email. The quotes from judges who discuss better court function after shackling reform come from the same article.

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