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SEPTEMBER 8, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary
-----THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Late Saturday, I signed into law S. 821, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974.

This is the first piece of legislation to reach my desk for action in the field of prevention and reduction of crime among our youth. Its passage by very strong majorities in both bodies of the Congress represents a continuation of our national commitment to reduce juvenile delinquency in the United States, to keep juveniles from entering the treadmill of the criminal process and to guarantee procedural and Constitutional protection to juveniles under Federal jurisdiction.

This national commitment is one of partnership with State and local governments through which, together, we spend over \$10 billion per year for criminal justice programs.

During the course of this bill's passage through the Congress, the executive branch voiced serious reservations with regard to several of its provisions for organizational change and fund authorizations. I continue to be concerned about these provisions -- especially the threat they carry with regard to increased Federal spending at a time when the economic situation demands across-the-board restraint, especially in the Federal budget.

Therefore, I do not intend to seek appropriations for the new programs authorized in the bill in excess of amounts included in the 1975 budget until the general need for restricting Federal spending has abated. In the interim, the estimated \$155 million in spending already provided under current programs will provide a continuation of strong Federal support.

This bill represents a constructive effort to consolidate policy direction and coordination of all Federal programs to assist States and localities in dealing with the problems of juvenile delinquency. The direction of our Federal programs has been fragmented for too long. This restructuring of present operation and authority will better assist State and local governments to carry out the responsibilities in this field, which should remain with them. Hopefully, the result will be greater security for all citizens and more purpose, sense, and happiness in the lives of young Americans.

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