

Juvenile delinquency



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It is one of the saddest realities of America; the extreme increase in juvenile crime is worrying us all. There is growing awareness in America about the treatment and laws of children who committed criminal acts because they have a history of being “treated like adults and processed through the same courts, jails and prisons” says Musick (24). In United States, it has been a respected idea to treat the juveniles, who rape, rob and kill, differently. Macko pointed out that, “People who have become victims of these young felons are angry and are calling for changes to be made in the juvenile justice system.”

The American government has taken a lot of steps to lower the crime rate amongst the juvenile. The first jail for such offenders was opened in 1825 and by the year of 1875, there were forty juvenile prisons. (Musick, 24). Chicago Reformers also worked a great deal for such children by opening the state reform schools. Musick says that, “by 1900, thirty-two states passed compulsory attendance laws” (25). Juvenile courts were another effort by the legislators.

The history shows that the legislation has been influenced through out to make the changes concerning the juvenile delinquency. The government always tried to look into the reasons which cause such horrifying situations. There are many reasons, which influence the legislation again and again to change its approach towards the juvenile criminals. Immaturity, drug addiction, severe poverty, and abuse, which can be physical, mental or sexual, are the most obvious causes so far. Musick writes that, “by the middle of twentieth century, news about neglect and abuse began to influence children’s laws” (28). Macko writes that, “Unfortunately, statistics prove that such youths are disproportionately affected by social problems

linked historically to crime. These social problems include: the breakdown of the family, poverty and poor education.” Homicides can become another basis for it. Macko estimates that, “ The United States averages, currently, about 21, 000 homicides per year.” Musick stresses on “ homelessness, current pattern of father abandonment and dual wage earnings” (37,) which are getting the children to indulge in criminal acts. He also points out that, “ Quality child care is expensive and scarce.” Hart wrote that, “ Juvenile sex offenders pasts might go public” to stop them from committing crimes. “ A federal law in July 2010, however, could compel states to reveal the identities of many young sex offenders on a Web site for at least 25 years” wrote Hart (2009.)

The legislators are taking a tough measure as the problem continues. McLellan stated that , “ California is on the verge of totally changing how it deals with juveniles.” Egelko made the headline, “ A judge can sentence an adult felon to life in prison under California’s” three strikes" law because of past convictions in juvenile court, where there are no jury trials, the state Supreme Court ruled Thursday.” McLellan wrote that, “ In California, 257, 829 kids were arrested in 1994 for felonies, misdemeanors and status offenses such as truancy and curfew violations.” The state Legislature, is dealing with sixty pending bills related to juvenile justice reform and they vary from “ minor tinkering to sweeping reforms” (McLellan). Presently, the heated topic in the media is of abolishment of death penalty of juveniles and is considered a restricted category. Musick conclude that, “ there will be no shortage of problem children in the US for some time to come... In sum, Children’s law, juvenile courts, and social service agencies have not

eliminated dependency, neglect and abuse” (37-38).

Bibliography

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