

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Senate Hearing on Protective Standards for Juvenile Detention Draws Statewide Support

WHAT: Parents, community representatives and advocates from across the state will present testimony in support of improving protections for children in juvenile detention during a public hearing today on SB 882, a bill introduced by Sen. Audrey Gibson. Sen. Greg Evers, chairman of the Criminal Justice Committee, placed the bill on the agenda. Representatives of the Children’s Campaign, Dream Defenders, NAACP and the Southern Poverty Law Center will deliver statements of support. A letter from correctional health services expert Michael D. Cohen, MD, FAAP will be presented.

WHEN: April 15, 2013, at 3:30 p.m.

WHERE: Mallory Horne Committee Room, 37 Senate Office Building

WHO: David Utter Esq., Director of Policy, Southern Poverty Law Center/Florida
Roy Miller, President, The Children’s Campaign of Florida
Dale Landry, NAACP/Florida
Elijah Armstrong, President, Dream Defenders

WHY: SB 882—Administering County and Municipal Delinquency Programs and Facilities—establishes criteria to demonstrate that a county or municipality is in compliance with state standards for operating juvenile delinquency programs and detention facilities.

In 2011, a bill that reversed decades of juvenile justice policy was passed without a single committee hearing in the House, and only one committee stop in the Senate. That law—SB 2112—allows sheriffs and counties to take over juvenile detention and detain children in adult jails, under standards essentially developed by the sheriffs themselves.

As since developed, these standards allow painful chemical and electronic restraints, and other adult-focused jail practices that are entirely inappropriate and dangerous for children. The law allows sheriffs to save money by providing inadequate staff to keep children safe and insufficient programming to keep children engaged and on the path to rehabilitation. The proposed law (SB 882) also deletes a provision in existing law (SB 2112) providing that a sheriff who complies with the subsection is not subject to any requirements for additional training, procedures, or inspections relating to the detaining of juveniles.

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Interviews with spokespersons may be arranged by contacting: Lee Mullane, SPLC Consultant for Southern Poverty Law Center, lmullane@mullanecommunications.com, 203-305-2163, or Dana Vickers Shelley, SPLC Communications Director, dana.shelley@splc.org, 334-956-8417 O, 334-318-9485 M