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*"The Juvenile Justice Initiative of Illinois works to achieve humane, equitable and sustainable reforms for children and young adults in the justice system."*

June 18, 2021

Honorable J.B. Pritzker  
Governor of the State of Illinois  
Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Office of the Governor  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 W. Randolph, 16-100  
Chicago, IL 60601

Re: In Support of Senate Bill 64

Dear Governor Pritzker,

The Juvenile Justice Initiative respectfully requests that you sign Senate Bill 64 into law.

The Juvenile Justice Initiative is a statewide privately funded nonprofit advocacy organization with a mission to educate and advocate for best practices and the highest standards of human rights for children and young adults in conflict with the law. We support your initiative to transform our statewide system of justice for children [IDJJ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Illinois Transformation Model] and believe that Senate Bill 64 is a necessary component of the transformation as it will encourage the expansion of restorative justice practices that your administration has embraced as part of a reimagined system of justice for children.

The legislation consists of a modest reform – it creates a legal privilege for communications in restorative justice practices. **Similar to the long-standing legal privilege in mediation** proceedings, the restorative justice privilege would simply prohibit communications made in restorative justice practices from being used in court. While the legislation is modest and straight-forward, it is essential to encourage participation in restorative justice practices.

The Juvenile Justice Initiative participated in the drafting and promotion of this legislation in partnership with a broad and diverse ad hoc coalition of juvenile justice stakeholders, community leaders, faith-based organizations, and survivors' advocates. The process of development and promotion of this legislation clarified that across our state the shift to restorative rather than punitive justice is ongoing and widespread. As you can see from the list of proponents on [ilga.gov](http://ilga.gov), the legislation is supported by many prominent elected officials, restorative justice



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practitioners, community organizations, and organizations that support the victims of domestic and sexual violence because it will encourage all of the participants in a restorative justice practice to engage in the type of open and honest dialogue that is necessary in order to bring healing and reconciliation to the many individuals and communities in our State who have experienced harm or oppression. In fact, **more than two hundred individuals signed witness slips in support of the bill** when it was heard in committee in the House and the Senate and **no one filed a witness slip in opposition** to the bill at either committee hearing.

In addition to broad-based support, the bill also had **bi-partisan support** as you can see from the House roll call and from the transcripts of the House floor debate. This is consistent with your ongoing message that the punitive approach to "justice" has not worked, and that we need to reimagine and transform our justice system. Restorative justice offers an alternative to the traditional punitive system of justice – an alternative that is grounded in community and that offers healing for survivors and a path forward for persons who have caused harm.

Attached is a fact sheet that explains at greater length why this modest but critical reform is needed and which lists the many individuals and organizations that support it. We will be happy to answer any questions.

We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of Senate Bill 64.

Very truly yours,

Herschella Conyers  
JJI Board Chair

Elizabeth Clarke  
Founder, JJI

Luis Klein  
Policy Director, JJI