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Advocate

December 2017

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Juvenile Justice Task Force Releases Report

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Happy Holidays and More

As the year ends and the holiday season begins, TCCY celebrates the advocacy work done across the state on behalf of children, wishes for a better year for all children and looks forward to a busy 2018.

In line with the designation of December as National Human Rights Month and the release of the report from the Joint Ad-Hoc Tennessee Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice, this newsletter focuses on juvenile justice.

TCCY hopes for happy and safe holidays for all, especially children.

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National Human Rights Month: Juvenile Justice Spotlight

December is Universal Human Rights Appreciation Month. It is also a good time to reflect on juvenile justice reform as a global issue. Human Rights Watch has consolidated information from numerous states and governments to prescribe a set of common-sense and universal ideals for keeping children safe and out of formal juvenile justice systems. Its last report recommended alternative procedures to formal institutionalization. Successful options include probation, mediation, counseling, community service and programs within the child's community. For children who use drugs, the report stated, proper programs should stress treatment and care. When children's behaviors are adequately understood and addressed, communities experience positive results and young individuals are allowed to contribute to society to everyone's benefit.

NOTE: Kaila Gilbert contributed this article. TCCY also celebrates its volunteers and interns, including Kaila, who submitted these articles while in New Zealand.

Human Rights Watch, *Children Behind Bars: The Global Overuse of Detention of Children*, <http://bit.ly/2iZ883Z>.

Human Rights Day, Dec. 10, <http://bit.ly/2zHoYLq>.

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Joint Ad-Hoc Tennessee Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice

The Joint Ad-Hoc Tennessee Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice released its report with major findings and recommendations. The task force, led by the Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives Beth Harwell and the Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, was made up of Tennessee juvenile justice experts. Goals of the group were to protect public safety; effectively hold juvenile offenders accountable; contain taxpayer costs; and improve outcomes for youth, families and communities in Tennessee.

The report found nearly half those held in a costly out-of-home placements had low level offenses, perhaps because of a lack of community based programs. Outcomes were inconsistent across the state, as were data collection and communication.

The task force recommendations meet three goals:

- Prevent deeper juvenile justice system involvement of lower-level youth through early response;
- Protect public safety and contain costs by focusing system resources on the highest-risk youth;
- Sustain effective practices through continued oversight and reinvestment in a stronger continuum of evidence-based services statewide.

The final report will be released this week. TCCY will make it available.

Bundgaard, C., WKRN-TV 2, **Tennessee juvenile justice task force releases findings, recommendations**, <http://bit.ly/2i9Z4bW>.

TN General Assembly, **Task Force Nov. 15 Meeting** Video, <http://bit.ly/2iFyTdq>.

Joint Ad-Hoc Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice **Briefing PowerPoint**, <http://bit.ly/2zUY6vp>.

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Tennessee Ranks Top in Combating Human Trafficking

Shared Hope International recently released a 2017 scorecard grading each state on the strength of its laws addressing child sex trafficking. Tennessee received a score of 96.5 out of 100, the highest grade in the nation and a clear A+. No state received perfect marks.



This superior score reflects recent efforts of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) to tackle human trafficking in the state. TBI initiatives in the last few years include improved victim services, new legislation, support for investigative forces and a renewed focus on arresting predators.

The report praised Tennessee's aggressive laws and offered a few recommendations. For instance, increasing trial protections and reducing potential bars to victim compensation might increase the willingness of victims to pursue justice. Specialized responses to victims could get Tennessee even closer to a 100 percent score. The website provides state-by-state legal analysis as well as a breakdown of each final grade by criteria.

NOTE: Kaila Gilbert contributed this article.

WBIR, Report: Tennessee ranked top state for combating human trafficking,
<http://on.wbir.com/2AcXRuB>.

Shared Hope International, **Protected Innocence Challenge: State Grades 2017, Family and Children Services,** <http://bit.ly/2k9SypX>.

Sorrell, R., *Bristol Herald Courier*, **Tenn., Va. receive human trafficking report cards,**
<http://bit.ly/2hZH7Ng>.

Senjanovic, N., Nashville Public Radio, **Tennessee Recognized for Laws Combating Child Sex Trafficking,** <http://bit.ly/2AjIC13>.

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Focus on Human Trafficking Gives Cyntoia's Story Has a New Plot Twist

Cyntoia Brown, the subject of a 2011 Independent Lens documentary, "Me Facing Life: Cyntoia's Story," is the impetus for a renewed focus on human trafficking. Celebrities, including Kim Kardashian, who volunteered her lawyers to help, have signed on to #FreeCyntoiaBrown.

Changes in system and community understanding of women and children who are trafficked as victims have reoriented attention on Brown's case. As a runaway, she was trafficked and killed a man who picked her up. She said she shot him with his own gun after becoming frightened for her safety. The case was transferred to adult court where she was found guilty of first degree murder and given a life sentence

The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals is scheduled to hear her case next year.

Sainato, M., The Real News, **Cyntoia Brown and The Flawed Juvenile Criminal System,**
<http://bit.ly/2kdKncu>.

Case, Stacy, WZTV Fox 17, **Child sex slave in Nashville prison for killing man who used her**, <http://bit.ly/2BrH8Rv>.

Senjanovic, N., **Why Tennessee Law Enforcement Now Describes Prostitution As Trafficking**, <http://bit.ly/2BsB7Eo>.

Egan, E., WKRN TV-2, **Second fastest growing crime affects 94 children in Tennessee each month**, <http://bit.ly/2jBCvNC>.

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Keeping Christmas: Social Messaging in the 19th Century

In 1843, appalled by the treatment of child workers, Charles Dickens vowed to strike a “sledgehammer blow . . . on behalf of the Poor Man’s Child.” He tore up a pamphlet he was writing and instead brought his concerns to life in the characters and dialogue of *A Christmas Carol*. Jacob Marley sums up Dickens’ message of employer responsibility as:

Mankind was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The deals of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!

The book has moved readers for 174 years.

Broich, J., *Time*, **The Real Reason Charles Dickens Wrote A Christmas Carol**, <http://ti.me/2kaEJr2>.

Charles Dickens Info, **Learn About A Christmas Carol**, <http://bit.ly/2ke2pL6>.

Eschner, K., *Smithsonian*, **Why Charles Dickens Wrote A Christmas Carol**, <http://bit.ly/2nk4u9R>.

(This information may differ from that in the movie, "The Man who Invented Christmas.)

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Early Warning: TCCY Website Addresses Changing

The state of Tennessee is making changes in its website pages, including TCCY’s. Navigation on the pages should not be changing, but the addresses (URLs) may. If you have bookmarked TCCY pages, please be aware you may need to change the bookmarks. Links in older newsletters may also cease to work. We will let you know when the changes go into effect.

If you experience difficulties with the TCCY website (tn.gov/tccy), please contact Fay Delk at fay.delk@tn.gov.

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Update



Congratulations to TCCY staff members on notable achievements. **Craig Hargrow**, TCCY Juvenile Justice and Second Look Commission director, graduated from the Tennessee Government Executive Institute. **Jennifer Drake-Croft**, TCCY director of Early Childhood Well-Being, completed work to achieve the Infant Mental Health (IMH) Endorsement® for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health (IMH-E®).



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Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 6, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., Webinar: **Using Data to Support Organizing and Policy Advocacy: 2017 Renter Week of Action**, <http://bit.ly/2AcE8eY>.

Dec. 8, 11:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., **East Tennessee Council on Children and Youth Legislative Council Meeting and Lunch**, Bridgewater Place (Kingston Hall), 205 Bridgewater Road, Knoxville. Guest speakers include Juvenile Court Judge Tim Irwin, Sen. Becky Massey, and DCS Commissioner Bonnie Hommrich and invited legislators.

Dec. 8, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST, **Southeast TCSW 2017 Annual Fall Conference**, Abba's House, 5208 Hixson Pike, Hixson. 5.5 total CEUs available, including 3 CEUs in ethics. Register at <http://conta.cc/2j93BMt>. Information: info@tcsw.org, 615-313-9980 or <http://bit.ly/2ypID6S>.

Dec. 12-13, **Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations Annual Conference, "Improving Overall Health: Understanding the Impact of Trauma and Addiction,"** Dec. 12-13, Franklin Marriott Cool Springs, 700 Cool Springs Blvd., Franklin. Information: 615-261-6100 or <http://bit.ly/2wuppuH>.

March 13-14, 2018, **Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium. Contact: John.Rust@tn.gov.

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In the News

Cavanagh, S., *Education Week*, **Data Snapshot: Who Are the Nation's Homeschoolers?**, <http://bit.ly/2hNCO7j>.

Raman, S., *Roll Call*, **States Face Children's Health Coverage Uncertainty**, <http://bit.ly/2zuihvW>.

Gonzales, J., *Tennessean*, **Tennessee to resume task force to improve TNReady testing**, <http://tnne.ws/2k4Kh4>.

Research Information

SCORE, *Excellence for All: How Tennessee Can Lift Our Students to Best in the Nation*, <http://bit.ly/2AL289F>.

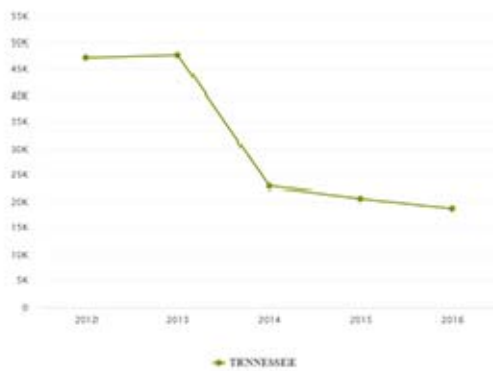
Prothero, A., *Education Week*, 'Precious Little Evidence' That Vouchers Improve Achievement, Recent Research Finds, <http://bit.ly/2n7U24S>.

Sims, M., and Bogle, M., Ascend at Aspen Institute, *Making Tomorrow Better Together: A Guide to Outcomes for 2Gen Policymakers*, <http://bit.ly/2AblgeM>.

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Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Youth Unemployment

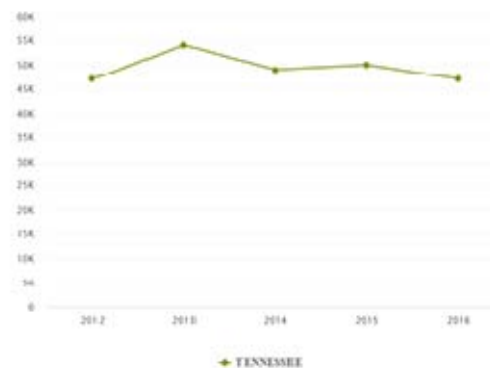


YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT (NUMBER)

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2jxGdHR>

Children Under Age 6 with No Parent in the Labor Force



CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6 WITH NO PARENT IN THE LABOR FORCE (NUMBER)

National KIDS COUNT
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2jw6aHW>

More data on Tennessee child well-being are available at <http://bit.ly/15alkVu>.

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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