



"THE TIPPING POINT IS THAT MAGIC MOMENT WHEN AN IDEA, TREND OR SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CROSSES A THRESHOLD, TIPS, AND SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE ."

Malcolm Gladwell

Iowa Commission on the Status of African Americans

Culver - Judge Administration



GOVERNOR CULVER ANNOUNCES DECREASE IN JUVENILE DETENTION RATES

We hope that you find this newsletter informative as we explore all possibilities to keep our constituency and the general public informed about various matters that affect Black Iowa.

We are committed to helping the Culver/Judge Administration Create One Iowa with One Unlimited Future.

DES MOINES – Governor Chet Culver today announced promising results from efforts to decrease Iowa’s rates of youth detention, especially for minority youth who are overrepresented in the state’s juvenile justice system.

Statewide, Iowa has decreased its overall detention of juveniles by about 15%, especially for low-level juvenile offenders, in each of the last two years, without any impact on public safety. In Black Hawk County, detention rates of minority youth declined by more than 20% for calendar year 2008. In Polk County, minority detention declined by 23.2%, and in Woodbury County minority detention was cut by 5.2%.

“I created the Youth, Race and Detention Task Force with one simple goal in mind – to help reduce the overrepresentation of minorities in Iowa’s prison system,” said Governor Culver. “Today, I am proud to announce that these efforts are working. As Governor, I will continue to do everything I can to ensure that not only minorities, but all Iowans, have the tools and resources they need for a brighter future.”

Executive Order 5, signed on Oct. 30, 2007, established the Governor’s Youth, Race and Detention Task Force, administered by the Criminal Juvenile and Justice Planning Division of the Iowa Department of Human Rights. Because national studies suggest that detaining low-level juvenile offenders makes them more likely to become involved in the justice system later on, DHR officials solicited assistance from the Casey Foundation in 2007 in an attempt to reduce Iowa’s use of juvenile detention.

Three Iowa counties – Black Hawk, Polk, and Woodbury – have received technical assistance from the Casey Foundation. Two have shown particular progress in making reductions in detention use. Between 2007 and 2008, Black Hawk reduced its average detention population by 31%. Polk reduced its average daily population even more: 40%. Figures for 2009 are expected to show continued reductions. Local officials assert that these decreases have been accomplished without an adverse effect on public safety.

With minorities – particularly African-Americans – over-represented in detention facilities, part of the reform effort is directed at reducing referrals of minority youth to detention. While figures so far don't show a reduction in the percentage of minority youth referred to detention, they show that the reductions seen thus far have been accomplished both among white (-15.7%) and minority (-12.8%) youth.

Rep. Wayne Ford (Des Moines) joined Governor Culver in congratulating the Youth, Race and Detention Task Force on their promising initial results. "I also want to applaud Governor Culver's efforts in appointing this group to look at an issue we have been facing for too long. I appreciate that Governor Culver's experience as a former teacher and sports coach gives him a different type of sensitivity toward youth, especially minorities," he added.



Chester J. Culver, Governor

Patty Judge, Lt. Governor

Please stay tuned for upcoming information with respect to developments with the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Disparity Study piloted in Davenport. The results are revealing, the 35 recommendations are forward-looking, and the subsequent economic developments in the city have state-wide implications. Please check out the study on our website at the following address.

Website: www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa

Abraham L. Funchess, Jr.

Division Administrator;

Kim Cheeks,

Program Planner;

Iowa Commission

on the Status of African Americans

Phone: 515-281-3855

Abraham.funchess@iowa.gov

Website: www.state.ia.us/dhr/saa

The Ongoing Covenant with Black Iowa: Helping the Culver/Judge Administration Create One Iowa with One Unlimited Future