



August 1, 2013

Dear Emily,

TheyThinkAloud (TTA) is passionately committed to restorative and rehabilitative alternatives to harsh, long-term punitive sentencing for juvenile offenders. Therefore, please allow this correspondence to serve as our official statement in support of The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. We are committed to supporting your efforts to end the practice of sentencing juveniles, under 18, to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

We strongly believe in the human capacity for change and ongoing development. Ample empirical evidence suggests juveniles are more vulnerable to impulsivity, poor decision-making and external influence while processing through the greatest biological changes in life. Sentencing a child to a life sentence for an offense at this vulnerable stage is irrational and inhumane.

The need for accessible and effective evidence-based intervention, prevention, and diversion approaches for high-risk youth is dire. We exist to serve this need while offering restorative and reintegration support to juvenile offenders. We believe in holding juveniles accountable in age-appropriate ways however, sentencing juveniles as adults is a gross failure of the system. Offending is a resulting behavior not an identifying characteristic. We must take responsibility for the outcomes of our youth, address the real needs, and take part in redirection efforts.

We stand by your cause and advocate for our youth.

Sincerely,

Leah B. Mazzola, CYC, ALC, CART, LCDCi
Founder, President, & CEO