

## **CS/HB 129 / SB 314: Relating to Juvenile Justice**

***Florida's youth do not belong in adult court.***

### **What is the purpose of CS/HB 129 / SB 314?**

- ▶ CS/HB 129 / SB 314 would limit the use of "direct file" to place children into the adult prison system. "Direct file" allows the state to transfer cases to adult court without a judge weighing in on the appropriateness of the transfer.
- ▶ The types of crimes for which children can be sentenced as adults would be limited to the more major violent offenses.

### **Why is CS/HB 129 / SB 314 necessary?**

- ▶ Over 60% of the more than 12,000 juvenile suspects moved to the adult court system in the past 5 years were charged with nonviolent felonies.
- ▶ Children as young as 12 have been tried as adults and in most cases do not understand adult court proceedings. Compounding this is the fact that their parents are not allowed to participate.
- ▶ An adult felony conviction brands a child for life, diminishing opportunities for education and future employment. Additionally, children convicted in adult court are more likely to reoffend.
- ▶ Minorities account for more than 60% of children arrested in Florida, but 76% of those sent to adult court.

### **How would CS/HB 129 / SB 314 work?**

- ▶ Under CS/HB 129 / SB 314, the unique needs and vulnerabilities of children would be recognized, ensuring fair criteria before a child can be tried as an adult, and allowing children to be housed only in juvenile facilities.
- ▶ By holding children appropriately accountable, there will be an increase in public safety and better use of taxpayer funds by rehabilitating children in the juvenile justice system, where better outcomes for the individual and community are more likely.

**Support Florida's children by voting "YES" on CS/HB 129 / SB 314!**