Alternatives to Incarceration

Your Name (First M. Last)

School or Institution Name (University at Place or Town, State)

**Alternatives to Incarceration**

 **Introduction**

The detention of the youth in the United States of America (USA) has remained a contentious debate for several decades. There exist economic and historical factors that fueled the resistance against the practice of juvenile detention and called for the construction of alternative methods. Incarceration can enhance the extent of recidivism as these rates in the United States are reported to be more than 50% for the individuals who stay in facilities. The previous instances and several studies indicate the youth who are incarcerated are at enhanced risk to recidivate than those supervised in community-based settings. Besides, youth are inherently inclined toward aging out the illegal behaviors. As per reports of the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention, the excessive contact of the youth with courts manifest their return at an increased rate (“Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) Programs - NY DCJS,” n.d.). Other factors underlying the cause of alternatives for juvenile detention are the adverse impacts on educational and development outcomes. Likewise, economic factors further stress on the pursuit of alternative methods for juvenile detention. 2 million juveniles are processed in juvenile courts per year in the United States. They are held in state-funded, residential facilities and post-adjudication at more than $300 per day. Amid the challenging economic hurdles, the alternative modes of detention ought to be deemed and compromising the public safety should be prevented.

**Alternatives to Incarceration Currently in Use**

 Several states have successfully advanced to minimize the reliance on youth prisons and jails and resorted to the community-based alternatives. Ohio, California, Alabama, Texas and New York have witnessed a significant decrease in incarceration after the legislation was promulgated to shift the resources toward community-based alternatives. One of the common technique pertains to the evidence-based practices that reduced recidivism and crime among youth (“Juvenile Detention Alternatives and Mass Incarceration - Juvenile Justice Initiative Juvenile Justice Initiative,” n.d.). These practices have proven to be beneficial and cost-effective than punitive measures. States ought to expand these evidence-based alternatives. Second, individual treatment is a process that accommodates a wide range of aspects. Such treatment also causes the juvenile to face hurdles in case he/she uses illicit drugs. Third, home confinement is a practice which constitutes the collaboration between the parents, teachers, and courts to critically monitor the offender. In this practice, the juvenile is not refrained from leaving home and is permitted to leave for school. It is one of the most productive alternatives which is mostly deployed when the juvenile is not deemed a potential threat to society and can be evaluated in the presence of the probationer officer for him.

 **Individual and Societal benefits of not Removing Offender from Community**

 There exists a wide range of profound benefits which are produced when the offenders are not removed from families or communities. The alienation from family can cause the offender to suffer from grave mental consequences as observed where offenders resort to violent acts inside the prisons. The primary purpose of not removing the offender form community pertains to the development of the offender and provision of a second opportunity (“Alternatives to Youth Incarceration,” n.d.). In the case of youth, it becomes imperative not to alienate them from the families and communities. It will cast adverse impacts on their education, social development and emotional development. The purpose of punishment can be served by living with families under stringent observation. The most prominent societal and individual benefit is the individual is offered the best platform to change the conduct and shun the criminal or violent activities in true letter and spirits.

References

Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) Programs - NY DCJS. (n.d.). Retrieved May 23, 2019, from NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services website: https://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/opca/ati\_description.htm

Alternatives to Youth Incarceration. (n.d.). Retrieved May 23, 2019, from the American Civil Liberties Union website: https://www.aclu.org/issues/juvenile-justice/youth-incarceration/alternatives-youth-incarceration

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