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A resolution by Supervisors Alexander and Sebring, creating a policy to replace the terms “juvenile” and “delinquent” with the terms “youth” or “children” to better reflect the mission, vision, and values of Milwaukee County, by recommending adoption of the following:

AN AMENDED RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it is becoming a preferred trauma-informed practice to cease deliberate institutional use of the words “juvenile” and “delinquent” as descriptors of children in the youth justice system, as evidenced by the actions of the Federal government and the State of Wisconsin (the State); and

WHEREAS, the need for trauma-informed care in the youth justice system is unquestionable when one considers that 90 percent of youth in the system report exposure to a traumatic event and 30 percent of those youth meet criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, per the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2015, the United States government moved away from the term “juvenile delinquent” when the Attorney General issued a press release utilizing the term “justice-involved youth” instead; and

WHEREAS, Federal departments such as the Department of Justice, Department of Education, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development use the term “justice-involved youth”; and

WHEREAS, many other organizations including the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the Illinois State Board of Education, the National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability, the California Social Work Education Center, and others have also transitioned to using the term “justice-involved youth”; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Children and Families (DCF) is also shifting away from the term “juvenile”, in recognition that the term “youth justice” more accurately reflects its mission of supporting children and youth; and

WHEREAS, according to DCF, the idea for the language switch came from the youth themselves and, is strongly supported by counties throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, as youth put it, “nothing good ever comes from a juvenile” – a profound statement that summarizes the assumptions and negative connotations inherent in the terms “juvenile” and “delinquent”; and

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WHEREAS, the State's First Lady has partnered with the DCF and various private organizations on the "Fostering Futures Initiative," aimed at helping the State to better recognize and understand the effects of trauma on the lives of children and families in the State; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County (the County) seeks to honor each person's inherent value as an individual, each person's right to be valued, the opportunities that each child and family have to chart a better course for their life, and recognizes that a child's actions need not forever define who they are and who they will become; and

WHEREAS, in furthering the vision, mission, and goals of the County, it is imperative to replace the negative labels of "juvenile" and "delinquent" with a term that better reflects the goals and outcomes that the County strives to achieve for youth in its justice system; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Health and Human Needs, at its meeting of September 20, 2017, recommended adoption of File No. 17-601 as amended (vote 4-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board) supports Milwaukee County (the County) youth involved in the justice system by creating a policy to remove from the County's institutional lexicon the negative labels "juvenile" and "delinquent" as terms used to describe children, and replace them with "children" and "youth" to better reflect the vision, mission, and goals of the County justice system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that nothing in this policy will restrict the County from using the terms "juvenile" or "delinquent" for reasons of clarity, compliance, or any other reason necessary to comply with Wisconsin State law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby authorizes and requests that the Department of Administrative Service (DAS) modify the name of the Vel R. Phillips Juvenile Justice Center to the Vel R. Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center in recognition of this policy change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board hereby authorizes and requests that DAS modify the name of the Vel R. Phillips Juvenile Detention Center to the Vel R. Phillips Youth Detention Center in recognition of this policy change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Department of Health and Human Services is hereby authorized and requested to change the name of the Delinquency and Court Services Division to the Division of Youth and Family Services to better reflect the mission of the County in serving youth in the justice system; and

90 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Clerk shall forward this resolution to
91 all County Departments to ensure timely notice of this policy.

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