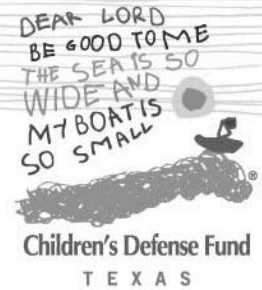


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## ***Texas children and youth incarcerated at alarming rate***

### ***Senator John Whitmire and Representative Harold Dutton join Children's Defense Fund for November 20 Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign Forum***

*500 community leaders to address epidemic of incarceration of children and youth*

**Houston, Texas** – A Black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 risk of going to prison in his lifetime; a Latino boy a 1 in 6 risk; and a White boy a 1 in 17 risk of the same fate. Last March, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Texas hosted a Cradle to Prison Pipeline® summit that drew over 700 participants from across the state to address the alarming rate at which children and youths in Texas are incarcerated and to examine the variety of risk factors which funnel disproportionate numbers of minority youth into a pipeline to prison.

On, **Thursday, November 20**, Children's Defense Fund of Texas will hold a follow up forum to present policy recommendations to the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature on what must be done to dismantle the pipeline. Recommendations were drafted by more than 100 educators, attorneys, community and faith leaders, juvenile justice and child welfare administrators and youth advocates over the last six months. The forum will be held at The Power Center, 12401 S. Post Oak Rd, from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm.

The need is urgent:

- Nationally, 86% of African-American, 83% of Latino and 58% of White fourth graders cannot read at grade level.
- It costs \$7,246 per pupil for a year of public education in Texas, while the cost of incarcerating a child in the Texas Youth Commission is \$56,000

Barbara Best, Children's Defense Fund Texas executive director said, "The *Cradle to Prison Pipeline* Campaign is an alarming wake up call for action. It is time for caring adults of all backgrounds to commit to prioritizing children's well being and to invest in prevention and intervention for youth before children get into trouble, drop out of school or suffer family breakdown."

This forum has already gained the attention of more than 500 community leaders, advocates, educators, elected officials, judges and law enforcement officials to review research and take action to dismantle the pipeline that is disrupting communities and eroding our future workforce.

The conference will include updates from local and state experts on solutions to dismantle the pipeline, including improving our juvenile justice system, enhancing early childhood education, providing health and mental health coverage for children and developing strategies to prevent violence and strengthen communities.

#### **WHO:**

**Senator John Whitmire**, Chairman, Criminal Justice Committee, Texas Senate

**Representative Harold Dutton**, Chairman, Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Committee, Texas House of Representatives

**Will Harrell**, Ombudsman, Texas Youth Commission

**Gail Revis**, CDF Texas Advisory Board Member and Chair, Texas *Cradle to Prison Pipeline* Campaign

**Laurie Glaze**, Director, One Voice Collaborative

**Barbara Best**, Texas Executive Director, Children's Defense Fund

**Laura Guerra-Cardus M.D.**, Texas Policy Director, Children's Defense Fund

**Youth Advisory Coalition** members who have experienced the juvenile justice and foster care systems

**WHEN:** **Thursday, November 20, 2008**  
**11:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**WHERE:        The Power Center, 12401 S. Post Oak Rd**

**Driving Directions to the Power Center:**

Head Southbound on West Loop 610

Exit 4B onto South Post Oak

Veer right and cross the railroad tracks under S. Main

After 300 meters, make a U-turn onto S Post Oak Rd. northbound

(If you reached Allum Rd, you've gone too far)

The Power Center will be on your right, beside Fiesta

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The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a non-profit child advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for 35 years to ensure a level playing field for all children. Children's Defense Fund - Texas offices in Houston, Austin and the Rio Grande Valley work to ensure every child a *Healthy Start* in life and access to affordable health coverage.