June 8, 2018

JIS Data Dissemination Committee
c/o Stephanie Happold – Data Dissemination Administrator
Office of the Administrator for the Courts
PO Box 41170
Olympia, WA 98504-1170

Re: ACLU-WA Request for Juvenile Court Records

Dear Members of the JIS Data Dissemination Committee,

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION FOUNDATION
Washington

901 Fifth Ave, Suite #630
Seattle, WA 98164
(206) 624-2184
aclu-wa.org

Jean Robinson
Board President

Kathleen Taylor
Executive Director

The ACLU of Washington (ACLU) has requested court records, including juvenile records, and wanted to provide committee members with background on the request and explain how the data will be used. The ACLU is a statewide, non-partisan, non-profit organization with over 80,000 members and activists, dedicated to the preservation of civil liberties. The ACLU is a strong advocate for protecting individual privacy and adheres to those principles when analyzing government records.

The ACLU and AOC entered into a Research Agreement (AOC Contract No. JIS15144) on October 2, 2014 as part of a data request for criminal court records. This agreement has been amended three times subsequently after the ACLU requested additional records. The court records requested include a variety of criminal justice data elements broken down by individual courts. These elements include demographics of individuals with court records, types of crimes, and case dispositions. The records are being used for policy development and research, and public education. For each request, we have also indicated that we are not seeking personally identifiable information, asking for unique identifiers instead, which have names redacted.

All public uses of the data are reviewed by AOC prior to publication. A good example of how this data is being used by the ACLU for public education purposes can be seen in this 2017 report – *Driven to Fail: The High Cost of Washington's Most Ineffective Crime – DWLS III* (https://www.aclu-wa.org/docs/driven-fail-high-cost-washingtons-most-ineffective-crime).

The ACLU strongly believes in protecting individual privacy, including dissemination of criminal justice records. These concerns are greatest for juvenile records. The ACLU's 2013 comments concerning proposed changes to GR 15 and Data Dissemination provide a good overview of our overall position. The letter is available here on page 29 of the PDF (http://www.courts.wa.gov/content/publicUpload/Data%20Dissemination%20Meetings/2013%2007%2029%20DDC%20MTG%20iMTP.pdf).

The ACLU respectfully requests that the Data Dissemination Committee permit the ACLU to receive juvenile bulk case information, sealed juvenile and adult cases, and dates of birth.

Sincerely,

Mark Cooke
Policy Director – ACLU of Washington Campaign for Smart Justice
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