

**From:** Kwesi Salih <diasporaiinitiative@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 6, 2017 11:59 AM  
**To:** TimWettack@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Kimberly Gordon  
**Subject:** Legislative Draft

I am writing you in hopes that you may be able and willing to assist me in [b]uilding a coalition ("a net that works") of individuals who are committed to creating effective and sustainable reforms within the criminal justice system of the State of Washington.

Since the late 20th century when researchers developed brain imaging technology that enabled them to see the teen brain in enough detail to track both its physical development and its patterns of activity, it has been known that our brains take much longer to develop than previously thought.

In the first full series of scans of the developing adolescent, a National Institute of Health (NIH) project that studied over a hundred young people as they grew up during the 1990's, showed that our brains underwent a massive reorganization between the 12th and 25th years. (Jay Giedd, Researcher-NIH).

I use the pronoun "we" because I was one of those teens growing up during the 90's. No, I wasn't involved directly in those studies, but I can tell you, I went through a lot of ups and downs. Acting like I was grown didn't mean I was an adult (see RCW 26.28.010). At the age of 43 now, I understand that teenagers take more risk than adults not because they don't recognize the dangers but because they weigh risk verses reward differently. In situations where risk can get a teen something they want, they value the reward more than the risk. Looking back on my own situation, I can honestly say that I responded strongly to the social reward that I believed I would get from my past behaviors. Unfortunately, I found out that in life there's a reality that we must respect and that we don't always receive what we think we got coming.

With the changes in law, both state and federal, Washington State has taken notice but there is still much to do. As a stakeholder and now subject matter expert, I am looking to effectuate change in how we address the system of criminal justice beginning with our adolescent and juvenile population. My strive is to create an Interdependent Working Group as an opening move to build off of the reforms that have been made thus far and continue developing effective ways to strengthen and protect the health of our communities.

So, if you are willing to continue the conversation and have the time to contribute to this process, I look forward to hearing from you. Any comments, suggestions or direction will be accepted by me at the below address.

Thank you for your time.

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