

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/a-juvenile-justice-reform-approach-thats-fit-to-print>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Its always satisfying when a national media outlet takes a stand on justice issues at the heart of Veras work.

So it was good to see *The New York Times* New Years Eve [editorial](#) praising the Mid-December settlement between the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Shelby County, Tennessee, to reform the countys juvenile justice system, which a [DOJ report released last April](#) found to consistently ignore the due process rights and equal protection guarantees of black youth, and overall to be marred by a pattern or practice of unconstitutional conduct in several areas.

This was not a piecemeal tack that focused on conditions of confinement in a given facility. Instead, in a detailed settlement agreement, the DOJ spelled out the many changes in policy and practice that the county must now fulfill.

Two weeks earlier, [Annie Salsich](#), director of Veras [Center on Youth Justice](#), [wrote in this space](#) about the positive significance of the U.S. Department of Justices push toward full-scale juvenile justice system reform in Memphis and surrounding Shelby County, where a lengthy investigation by the DOJ's Civil Rights Divisions Special Litigation Section found evidence of widespread violations of the rights of the young people.

As Annie Salsich said and the *Times* editorial concurred the DOJ's holistic view of juvenile justice reform in this case is a model for improving youth justice around the country.

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