

## **Elizabeth “Betsy” Clarke**

Founder and President of the Juvenile Justice Initiative

*Springfield, Illinois*

Betsy Clarke is currently the founder and President of the Juvenile Justice Initiative, a statewide advocacy organization to promote rational and effective juvenile justice policies in Illinois. The privately funded Juvenile Justice Initiative began in 2000 with a mission to transform the juvenile justice system in Illinois by reducing reliance on confinement, enhancing fairness for all youth, and developing a comprehensive continuum of community-based resources throughout the state. The JJI has successfully advocated for the creation of a new Dept. of Juvenile Justice, the creation and expansion of Redeploy Illinois (a fiscal incentive program to shift funding to community based alternatives to confinement), juvenile drug transfer reform, early appointment of counsel for juveniles who are in detention, and the inclusion of seventeen year old misdemeanor offenders in the juvenile court.

Prior to developing the Juvenile Justice Initiative, Betsy served as Juvenile Justice Counsel for the Office of the Cook County Public Defender for six years. Prior to the Public Defender’s office, Betsy spent 15 years in the Office of the State Appellate Defender, serving as Legislative Liaison and as Juvenile Justice Coordinator, in addition to appellate practice as an Assistant Defender.

Betsy is a gubernatorial appointee to the newly created Advisory Board for the Dept of Juvenile Justice, appointee to the Redeploy IL Partnership, appointee to the Children’s Mental Health Partnership, member of the Legislative Committee and past chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee of the Illinois State Bar Association, current co-chair of the Midwest Juvenile Defender Center, current co-chair of the National Juvenile Justice Network, past chair of the Midwest Coalition of Juvenile Justice, past chair of the Legislative Committee of the Illinois Attorneys for Criminal Justice, as well as a past gubernatorial appointee to the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission. She has authored numerous articles, including the chapter on Appellate Review in the IICLE Juvenile Law Handbook, and a detailed study of the Illinois juvenile transfer provisions published in the National Journal of the Juvenile and Family Court Judge’s Association. She has been honored by the National Coalition for Juvenile Justice, the Illinois Public Defender Association, the Illinois Probation Association, the Illinois Attorneys for Criminal Justice, the Illinois State Bar Association, and was recently named a “Champion for Change” by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s Models for Change Initiative.