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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

## 2007-08

(session year)

## Joint

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\* Contents organized for archiving by: Stefanie Rose (LRB) (October 2012)

**Testimony of Amy Smith, Deputy Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of Corrections  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee  
April 10, 2008**

**Audit Report 08-3  
17-Year-Old Offenders in the Adult Criminal Justice System**

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and to address the Audit Bureau's review of 17-year-old offenders in the adult criminal justice system. Speaking on behalf of Secretary Raemisch and myself, we would like to recognize the Audit Bureau for its efforts in analyzing this very complicated subject.

I am speaking for information only today. The Department of Corrections has not taken a position on the audit findings, nor on proposed legislation that would affect the age of criminal responsibility in Wisconsin. Secretary Raemisch and I believe the Department can contribute to the public discussion of this issue by providing data and analyzing options to the extent we are able to do so. Regardless of whether 17-year-old offenders remain in the adult court system or are transferred to the juvenile justice system, the Department strives to assure all offenders receive high-quality, effective services that will hold them accountable for their actions and protect the public.

The review brought together arrest data, court records, information from the Department of Corrections and interviews with system stakeholders in an effort to describe the experience of 17-year-old offenders in the criminal court system. The Department finds it particularly noteworthy that, according to the review, only 5 percent of offenders who were 17 years old at the time of their offense received a prison sentence during the review period. Almost 80 percent of 17-year-olds prosecuted for felony offenses were placed on probation by the courts. While resources of the juvenile justice system cannot be used on this population under current law, the Audit Bureau visited five counties and found that judges and District Attorneys are applying discretion on severity of charges and dispositions for 17-year-old offenders in the adult system. The review notes that while judges impose prison sentences in the most serious cases, they are more likely to order probation for 17-year-old offenders.

Therefore, we were not surprised by the Audit Bureau's finding that the small number of sentenced 17-year-olds were more likely than older offenders to have committed crimes against persons. The audit report provided several pieces of information suggesting that 17-year-old offenders sentenced to prison committed more serious crimes than sentenced offenders generally, received longer sentences, and had more intensive needs for treatment and programming. It appears to us in reviewing this information that criminal courts in Wisconsin are using prison as a consequence for only the most serious and violent 17-year-old offenders, and providing community-based sanctions for the vast majority of young offenders.

The review looked at how 17-year-old offenders are treated in the state prison system. We take pride in the statistic that about 75% of the young offenders admitted to prison participated in educational programming, especially given the fact that inmates can refuse educational services when they reach 18 years of age. As demonstrated in Table 29, program participation and completion is high among youthful offenders in the adult system. Our published response to the review gave several other qualifiers regarding the data on program participation that I won't revisit at this time.

I do, however, want to address the report's comparison of recidivism data for various groups committed to DOC by the courts. As we pointed out in our response, national data show a higher rate of recidivism for 18-, 19- and 20-year-old offenders, with the Bureau of Justice Statistics concluding "The younger the prisoner when released, the higher the rate of recidivism." Given this statistic, as well as the fact that a small number of 17-year-olds are being sentenced to prison, it was not surprising to see a higher rate of recidivism among this group in Wisconsin. In addition, because the Bureau studied only a small number of releases, it is possible that the small sample size arguably skews an otherwise valid statistical conclusion, and possibly over-states the recidivism rate for this sample. Finally, the varied definitions of recidivism between the adult and juvenile correctional agencies in our Department add another layer of complexity to interpreting the different numbers cited in the review. It was not surprising that the review found younger offenders who were placed on probation re-offended at higher rates than older probationers. Younger people tend to be more impulsive, less likely to have a steady job and family obligations, and lack other factors that, if addressed, help older offenders succeed at leading productive and law-abiding lives.

Another area the Department would like to address is the Audit Bureau's fiscal projection of returning 17-year-old offenders to the juvenile system. At this point, no one knows for sure how county agencies, prosecutors, courts and other stakeholders would respond to a change in the age of criminal responsibility. We can safely predict that discretion will continue to be exercised as to which youth are retained in juvenile court and which are waived to adult court. However, today's data cannot tell us how many 17-year-old offenders would be entered into a juvenile deferred prosecution program, proceeded against by way of a delinquency petition, or dealt with in criminal court. Nor do we know, of those 17-year-olds found delinquent, how many would receive community-based services compared to those who might be placed out-of-home, in a juvenile correctional facility, or in the state-funded Serious Juvenile Offender Program. All of these factors will have an impact on the cost of transferring 17-year-olds to the juvenile system, as well as what proportion of that cost would be borne by the state and by county agencies.

The Department also analyzed some of these factors in developing the fiscal note for Assembly Bill 746, which was introduced by Representative Friske and Senator Erpenbach. Since most of the data on delinquent youth and their services is maintained at the local county level and not reported to the state, it is difficult to come up with meaningful dollar estimates. We looked at the effect on daily rates for state juvenile correctional facilities, and calculated how daily rates charged to counties would change if 100, 200 or 300 17-year-old offenders went to juvenile facilities instead of prison. We estimate that daily rates would go down due to more efficient use of existing resources, although overall costs to county Youth Aids budgets would rise. For example, if the average daily population at the state juvenile facilities were to rise by 100 (that is, about a 16% increase over today's population) in state fiscal year 2009, we would need to gradually add 67 new staff and \$4.9 million in annual expenditures to provide the same level of service and safety. Daily rates would go down about 7%, from the current statutory amount of \$268 to an estimated \$249.

As the Audit Bureau review pointed out, there would be little opportunity to fund the increased Youth Aids costs for services to 17-year-old juvenile offenders by transferring money from the adult corrections budget. Given prison overcrowding and the overtime costs we're paying to provide community-based supervision, losing a hundred 17-year-old inmates or a

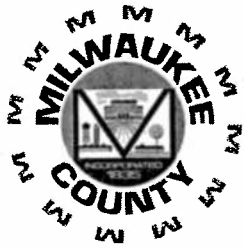
few hundred probation cases will not free up significant amounts of funding to add to Youth Aids or to provide direct state payment of new costs for 17-year-old juveniles.

The juvenile justice system today is very different from that of 1995, with many more programs and services available on the county level to effectively serve young offenders in their homes and neighborhoods. Developing good estimates of what the services for 17-year-old offenders would look like and what those services would cost in the juvenile system could easily be an entire study in itself. Given the potentially huge fiscal impact on county human services departments, sheriffs and detention facilities, we believe this topic deserves additional analysis.

The Audit Bureau's work adds value to the discussion regarding 17-year-old offenders in the criminal justice system. We look forward to participating with other interested agencies in future steps.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and I would be happy to answer any questions.





OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# Milwaukee County

SCOTT WALKER • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**Date:** April 10, 2008

**To:** Joint Committee on Audit Co-Chairs  
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz and Senator Jim Sullivan

**From:** Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker

**Re:** Testimony on February 2008 Legislative Audit Bureau Report  
17-Year-Old Offenders in the Adult Criminal Justice System

Representative Jeskewitz and Senator Sullivan, I am pleased to join Milwaukee County's Director of Delinquency and Court Services Eric Meaux here today. As Senator Sullivan well knows, in his other life, Eric also serves the public as an alderman representing the people of Wauwatosa. Committee members, we both appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today to respond to the findings of the Legislative Audit Bureau Report on 17-Year-Old Offenders in the Adult Criminal Justice System.

Auditor Janice Mueller and her team, as usual, have done exceptional work. Milwaukee County especially appreciates the auditors' efforts to explore the potential cost ramifications to counties of returning 17-year-olds to the jurisdiction of juvenile court. The Audit Bureau estimates "*that returning 17-year-olds to the juvenile justice system could initially result in county juvenile corrections cost increases of between \$53.5 million and \$82.4 million per year.*"

As Milwaukee County Executive, this staggering fiscal estimate gives me considerable pause. Already Wisconsin counties are struggling to meet their mandated obligations with limited fiscal resources from the State. We cannot continue to call upon the strapped local property taxpayer to fill this funding gap. That's why I reworked my schedule to come here today to make sure that the voice of counties on this matter was heard.

When legislation was introduced last session to return many 17-year-olds to juvenile court, Milwaukee County opposed it. While the bill did have a funding mechanism, by no estimation did it even begin to cover the projected cost increases to counties. Milwaukee County has conservatively estimated that returning 17-year-olds to the jurisdiction of juvenile court would cost our local property taxpayers (**conservatively**) **\$23.4 million a year**. This sum is approximately 10% of Milwaukee County's current property tax levy. Or, for a different perspective, it is the entire amount Milwaukee County is committing to the Parks Department budget this year.

We often hear that those who support returning 17-year-olds to the jurisdiction of juvenile court do so, in part, because, they want these older offenders to have access to the same types of rehabilitative, educational, and alternative programs available to younger delinquents through the County system. That's why, at the request of Co-Chair Jeskewitz, Milwaukee County has prepared a summary of the programs and services we currently provide, quite proudly, through a combination of property tax levy and state Youth Aids funding to youth ages 10 through 16. Director Meaux can go over Milwaukee County alternative programming with you in further detail.

**What you need to know is, if 17-year-olds are returned to the juvenile court without the full financial backing of the State, Milwaukee County's ability to maintain current programming and service capacity levels for all age groups would be severely compromised because of the increased demand for services.**

Before turning over this discussion to Director Meaux, I just want to touch base with you on the 2007-09 budget shortfall. As you work with the Governor to resolve the deficit, Milwaukee County asks that the Legislature prioritize and preserve Youth Aids revenues to counties.

Milwaukee County appreciates that the final 2007-09 budget provided additional Youth Aids to counties. But, please know, that before Milwaukee County sees \$1 in Youth Aids, the State first pays itself for the juvenile commitments to their institutions. Since the beginning of the State fiscal year, the Department of Corrections has held about 75% of Youth Aids funds slated for Milwaukee County.

The daily rates the State charges counties to house juvenile commitments are now at an astronomical level. In fact, the 2007-09 budget hiked these rates by almost 30%. Back in June, the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau projected that these rate hikes would cost Wisconsin counties about \$18 million over the biennium. Effective July 1, 2008, the Department of Corrections will charge counties \$268 a day (\$97,820 per year) to send one juvenile to a State-operated correctional institution for a year. That same \$100,000 investment could fund the tuition costs of sixteen University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee students. From a county management perspective, these high rates also make it extremely difficult to maintain existing service levels and to budget prospectively. If just 10 more kids were sentenced to one of the State institutions than we projected when originally budgeting, Milwaukee County would face a \$1 million cost overrun.

Thank you for listening to Milwaukee County today. If Committee members are interested, Director Meaux is available to go over how Milwaukee County reached its cost estimate and to discuss the particulars of the different community-based programs Milwaukee County offers to the delinquent youth we currently serve.



**BASIC SHEET ON PROGRAMS**  
**Delinquency and Court Services Division**  
**Milwaukee County Department of Health & Human Services**

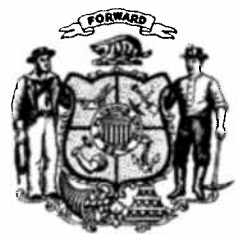
County managed community-based programming. These are programs serve youth as a diversion from entry into the juvenile justice system, as an alternative to detention while court is pending, or as community-based service following disposition in addition to court-ordered supervision. Probation and Detention are excluded.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Budgeted Served</b>
In-Home Monitoring Programs	An intensive in-home program for alleged delinquent youth who have not committed a serious offense but are at risk for placement in detention or shelter care without additional support services and are pending future court appearances. The services are aimed at reducing recidivism and ensuring court appearances.	\$1,380,737	1,300
Temporary Shelter Care	State licensed facilities providing short-term supervised residential programming for youth who may not be returned home pursuant to a court order. Youth are delinquent, pre-delinquent and or juveniles in need of protection or services.	\$2,296,289	1,200
Sex Offender Treatment	The Adolescent Sex Offender Treatment Program serves the needs of delinquent youth whose treatment needs can be met in a structured, community-based setting. The program provides various treatment modalities and service options including group, individual, and family counseling by licensed staff.	\$134,912	103
Day Treatment	A non-residential, education program for delinquent youth. This is a partnership between Milwaukee County, community-based agencies, and the Milwaukee Public Schools. Program includes educational services, licensed counseling and support services. Includes services for expelled youth.	\$1,282,920	260
Probation Services Network	A County operated network of community-based agencies certified to provide a variety of clinical and support services on a fee-for-service basis to delinquent youth currently on court ordered supervision, including gender specific program options and services provided to youth serving detention sanctions	\$789,944	600
Serious Chronic Offender Program	This program provides intensive supervision, structure and support in community-based settings, typically the parental home. Many of the delinquent youth have been found to be	\$544,575	80

	appropriate for a correctional placement however they been are allowed to remain in the community contingent upon compliance with supervision and programming.		
Firearm Offender Supervision Program	This program provides intensive supervision, structure and support in a community-based setting, typically the parental home. The program for youth found delinquent of possessing a firearm and includes programming tailored for this target population.	\$881,840	146
Group Home and Foster Care Placement	State licensed homes providing community-based alternative living arrangements for delinquent youth who cannot return home in the immediate future pursuant to a court order. Many of the delinquent youth are experiencing problems within their families, schools, and or in the community.	\$1,626,778	101
Wraparound Milwaukee Program	Wraparound Milwaukee serves families and their delinquent youth presenting serious emotional or mental health needs as identified by the juvenile justice system. Youth are at immediate risk of placement in a residential treatment center, juvenile correctional facility or psychiatric hospital. The program was designed to reduce the use of institutional-based care such as residential care centers and inpatient psychiatric hospitals while providing more services in the community and in the child's home.	\$8,032,174	600
Focus Program	A multi-phase program utilizing collaborative efforts of a state licensed residential Type II facility, county probation supervision, and mental health services provided by Wraparound Milwaukee for youth who cannot be returned home in the immediate future pursuant to a court order. Participating delinquent youth have been found to be appropriate for a state correctional placement however they have been allowed to remain in the community contingent upon compliance with supervision and community programming.	\$1,768,416	100
First Time Juvenile Offender Program Services	A diversion program targeting youth referred to the juvenile justice system for a first offense. A structured program that utilizes the tracking services of community-based agencies in conjunction with services matched to meet the needs of youth being served.	\$630,000	680
Prevention Services	The Delinquency Division funds prevention services for two community-based programs. Safe Alternatives for Youth supports positive community alternatives for youth and Milwaukee Sports Authority supports community-wide infrastructure for youth sports	\$350,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$19,718,385</b>	<b>5,170</b>
<b>BUDGETED YOUTH AIDS</b>		<b>\$12,396,077</b>	
<b>PERCENTAGE</b>		<b>63%</b>	



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





**Jim Doyle**  
Governor

**Rick Raemisch**  
Secretary

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**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Corrections**

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May 2, 2008

Senator Jim Sullivan, Co-Chair  
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-Chair  
Joint Legislative Audit Committee  
Wisconsin State Legislature  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Sullivan and Representative Jeskewitz:

I appreciated the opportunity to speak at the April 10 meeting of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee regarding the audit proposal on Treatment of Adult Inmates with Mental Illness in the Wisconsin Corrections System.

In response to discussion at the meeting, I am sending you information on mental health services provided at juvenile correctional institutions in the Division of Juvenile Corrections. The attached pages provide a summary of the mental health screening methods, interventions, and treatment services provided to youth at our juvenile correctional institutions.

If you have additional questions after reviewing the attached information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Smith'.

Amy Smith  
Deputy Secretary

Attachments

cc: Rick Raemisch  
Charles Tubbs  
Silvia Jackson  
Bob Margolies  
Bob Nikolay  
Wes Ray  
Shelley Hagan

## **Attachment 1**

### **Division of Juvenile Corrections Mental Health Services Summary**

#### **Screening for Mental Health Needs**

Upon arrival, a nurse in the Health Services Unit (HSU) screens each youth for past mental health problems including whether they are presently suicidal or have attempted to harm themselves in the past. Problems or concerns on the part of staff can initiate clinical services intervention. A screening for mental health problems also takes place soon after being placed in the Reception Cottage, where all youth new to the institution are interviewed by a social worker, and are administered a suicide assessment inventory and the MAYSI II. If any of these reviews cause concerns, clinical services is contacted. Clinical services has a psychologist assigned to the Reception Cottage, as well as a psychology intern. Clinical services will do a follow up assessment on any youth about whom the social worker is concerned. At Southern Oaks Girls School (SOGS), all youth on Reception are administered two additional mental health tests (the Brief Symptom Inventory, and the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory) and are reviewed by the Psychologist Supervisor to determine their need for referral to the institution's in-house mental health unit, Stepping Up.

Evaluation of mental health problems is an ongoing process at each of the three juvenile correctional institutions. Staff is encouraged to refer youth for assessment whenever there is evidence to suggest emotional problems. In addition, psychologists regularly attend weekly multi-disciplinary Team Meetings held in each cottage. This allows the psychologist assigned to that team to become aware of specific youth problems which might be amenable to treatment. These youth are evaluated by the psychologist to assess their need for treatment. Because of the higher prevalence of mental health issues among the female youth at SOGS, all these youth are assigned to an individual psychologist for ongoing assessment and treatment as needed.

#### **Determination of Mental Health Needs**

Defining what constitutes psychological or mental disturbance is more complicated than one might initially imagine. This is because there are a myriad of definitions of what constitutes mental illness, psychological disturbance and emotional disturbance. These definitions, additionally, cross professional categorizations from medicine to psychology to education. Additional legal definitions are not all the same, change with time and vary based on case law. Consequently, to determine the number of youth we consider to have significant mental health needs, needs beyond those due to their delinquency, we reviewed the number of youth receiving psychotherapy from a psychological services clinician on a twice a month or more basis, and secondly the number of youth on psychotropic medication. Summaries of this information for these juvenile institutions are provided below.

### **Lincoln Hills School (LHS)**

One hundred and four (104) youth are seen by Clinical Services twice a month or more at LHS. This means 44% of the population meets this criterion.

Eighty-two (82) youth (36%) are being prescribed psychotropic medication by the psychiatrist at LHS. It is important to note that many of those youth were admitted to LHS already taking medication prescribed in their county prior to their arrival. If the chief psychologist determines that a youth should be considered for transfer to one of the 13 designated Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC) beds for LHS youth, the MJTC and LHS liaisons consult to determine if transfer of that youth is appropriate.

### **Ethan Allen School (EAS)**

One hundred and fifty-two (152) youth are seen by Clinical Services twice a month or more at EAS. This means 56.5% of the population meets this criterion.

Seventy (70) youth (26%) at Ethan Allen School have been prescribed psychotropic medication at EAS. As it is at LHS many of these youth arrived with active prescriptions for psychotropic medication, and others had received it in the past, but were not on it upon arrival. If the chief psychologist determines that a youth should be considered for transfer to one of the 16 designated Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center beds for EAS youth, the MJTC and EAS liaisons consult to determine if transfer of that youth is appropriate.

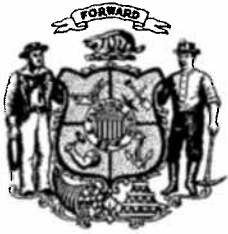
### **Southern Oaks Girls School (SOGS)**

Because of the higher prevalence of mental health issues among female youth, sixty (60) youth are seen by clinical services twice a month or more.

Forty-seven (47) youth (78%) at SOGS have been prescribed psychotropic medication and, like the boys at EAS & LHS, many of these youth arrived with active prescriptions for psychotropic medication, and others had received it in the past, but were not on that medication upon arrival.

Fourteen (14) youth (28%) at SOGS are assigned to the institution's in-house mental health unit, Stepping Up, due to the severity of their mental health symptoms. In extreme cases, youth are transferred to a state mental health facility, if their mental health symptoms cannot be effectively managed within the institution. Currently, one youth (1.7%) is placed in a state mental health facility at the Winnebago Mental Health Institute.



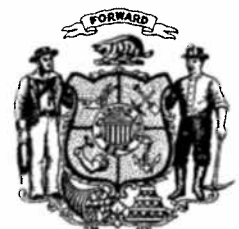


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State of Wisconsin - Legislative Reference Bureau  
1 East Main Street, Suite 200  
Madison, WI 53703





**Treatment of Juveniles  
in the Wisconsin Criminal Court System:  
An Analysis of Potential Alternatives**

Breann Boggs  
Brad Campbell  
Justin Martin  
Saul Wolf

Prepared for the  
Wisconsin Joint Legislative Council

Workshop in Public Affairs, Domestic Issues  
Public Affairs 869  
Spring 2008



Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs  
University of Wisconsin Madison

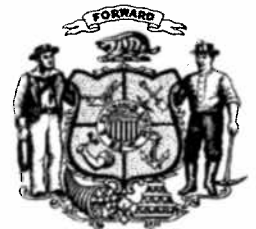
DRAFT REPORT. PLEASE DO NOT COPY OR DISTRIBUTE

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# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



# “Raise the Age” – Return 17-Year-Olds to Juvenile Court

A proposal will be introduced this fall to the Wisconsin Legislature to return 17-year-olds to juvenile court jurisdiction, thus allowing these juveniles access to critical treatment services not available to them under adult court jurisdiction.

by Eileen Hirsch, Ginger Murray  
& Wendy Henderson

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A 17-year-old girl gets in a tiff with a 15-year-old girl about a 16-year-old boy? In one author's case, a 17-year-old client was arrested, handcuffed, strip-searched, booked, incarcerated, and charged with felony child abuse. How can this happen?

## Current Law

Wisconsin currently treats as adults all 17-year-olds charged with violating laws. The State Bar of Wisconsin has joined a growing number of statewide organizations in supporting legislation to return 17-year-olds to the juvenile court system. These groups understand that adolescents are different, and that those differences are critical to our legal system.

Today, Wisconsin is one of only 13 states that charge all 17-year-old offenders in adult court. They typically are not violent offenders. In 2004, only 1.5 percent of arrests of 17-year-olds were for violent index offenses (the offenses classified by the Bureau of Justice Statistics as violent index are murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault). The vast majority of arrests of 17-year-olds are for nonviolent crimes such as disorderly conduct,



liquor law violations, and petty theft. See Figure 1 on next page.

## Legal History

For decades, Wisconsin and most other states drew the line between juvenile and adult criminal court jurisdiction at age 18. Thus, 17-year-olds had access to treatment and education through the juvenile court system. In 1995, with the creation of the Juvenile Justice Code,

Wis. Stat. chapter 938, 17-year-olds in Wisconsin were redefined as “adults” for criminal law purposes. As a result, they became excluded from the services offered through the juvenile courts.

## Legislation in the Making

The Wisconsin Legislature soon will be presented with a proposal to return 17-year-olds to juvenile court. The proposal would not change current law,

which requires younger adolescents to be tried as adults for some of the most serious crimes. For example, any cases of first-degree intentional homicide must be filed in adult court for offenders over age 10. Nor would the proposal limit the discretionary authority of juvenile court judges to waive 17-year-olds to adult court, just as they currently have the authority to waive younger adolescents. Currently, any child over age 15 can be waived into adult court for any crime on motion by the prosecutor and approval of the court. The proposal simply would change the age of jurisdiction for juvenile court and thus would allow 17-year-olds to participate in juvenile court and have access to critical treatment services currently only available to adolescents under 17. See Figure 2.

**Five Reasons to Support the Proposal**

There are five good reasons to support raising the age of adult court juris-

diction to age 18. As the American Medical Association wrote recently in a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court:<sup>1</sup>

“The adolescent’s mind works differently from ours. Parents know it. This court has said it. Legislatures have presumed it for decades or more. And now, new scientific evidence sheds light on the differences.”

1) **The U.S. Supreme Court has said that adolescents are different than adults.** In *Roper v. Simmons*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that juveniles under age 18 are categorically different from adults and cannot be subjected to the death penalty.<sup>2</sup> The court cited three general differences:

“First, lack of maturity and an underdeveloped sense of responsibility are found in youth more often than in adults and are more understandable among the young. These qualities often result in impetuous and ill-considered actions and decisions....

“Second, juveniles are more

vulnerable or susceptible to negative influences and outside pressures, including peer pressure....

“Third, the character of a juvenile is not as well formed as that of an adult. The personality traits of juveniles are more transitory, less fixed.”<sup>3</sup>

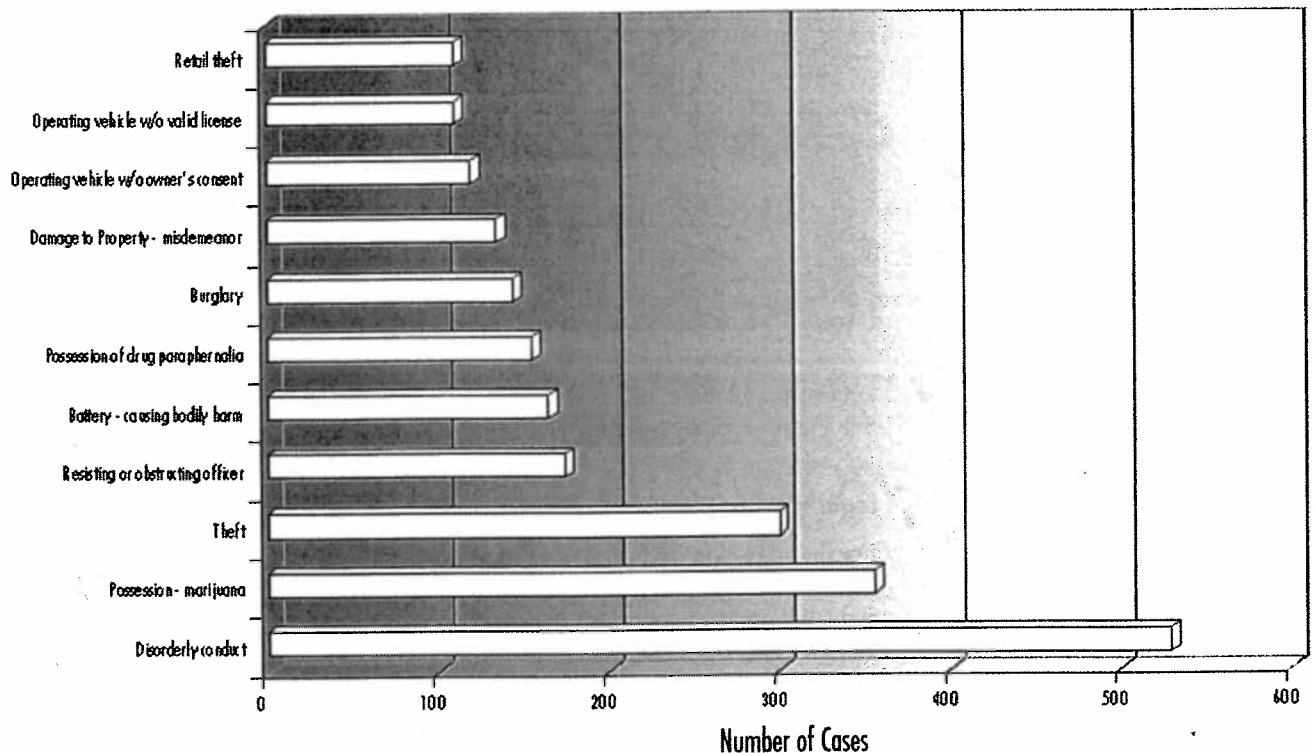
*Roper* did not break entirely new ground. In 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized a constitutional distinction between children under age 18 and adults, citing “the peculiar vulnerability of children; their inability to make critical decisions in an informed, mature manner; and the importance of the parental role in child rearing.”<sup>4</sup> In 1982, the Supreme Court held that “youth is more than a chronological fact ... minors often lack the experience, perspective and judgment expected of adults.”<sup>5</sup>

These decisions, with hundreds of others from state and lower fed-

Figure 1

**Most Common 17-year-old Offenses, 2005**

(Data from CCAP on 17-year-olds’ cases not dismissed in 2005.)



eral courts, provide a strong legal basis for dividing juvenile and adult criminal court jurisdiction at age 18.

2) **Legislatures have presumed that adolescents are different than adults for decades or more.** The Wisconsin Legislature has specifically found, regarding children under age 18, that:

“Immature minors often lack the ability to make fully informed choices that take account of both immediate and long-range consequences.”<sup>6</sup>

Dozens of other laws recognize that age 18 is the age at which society considers people old enough to make thoughtful choices, withstand peer pressure, and consider the long-range consequences of their actions. “Minor” means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years, except that for purposes of investigating or prosecuting a person who is alleged to have violated a state or federal criminal law or any civil law or municipal ordinance, ‘minor’ does not include a person who has attained the age of 17 years.”<sup>7</sup> Minors cannot sign contracts, make wills, or serve on juries,<sup>8</sup> and the law forbids them from smoking and from drinking alcohol. Without parental consent, they cannot marry,<sup>9</sup> quit school, get a driver’s license, possess a weapon, get an abortion, or get a tattoo.<sup>10</sup> Conviction of a crime carries life-altering consequences. As our legislature has recognized in so many areas, persons under the age of 18 need society’s protection.

3) **New scientific evidence sheds light on the differences.** Adolescents do not simply “choose” to disobey the law in the same way that adults do.

Figure 2

**Mandatory Original Adult Court Jurisdiction**

Current Law, Ages	Proposed Law, Ages	Crimes
10 to 16	10 to 17	First Degree Intentional Homicide, Second Degree Reckless Homicide, Sexual Assault, Intentional Homicide
10 to 16	10 to 17	Juvenile who commits assault on a corrections officer or another juvenile is in a secure correctional facility
17	18	All crimes
<b>Waiver to Adult Court</b>		
Current Law, Ages	Proposed Law, Ages	Crimes
14 to 16	14 to 17	Felony Murder, Kidnapping, Sexual Assault, Reckless Homicide, First or Second Degree Sexual Assault, Taking Hostages, Robbery with a Dangerous Weapon, Manufacturing or Distributing Controlled Substances, Commission of a Felony at the Head of a Gang
15 to 16	15 to 17	Violation of any Wisconsin Statute

Brain research during the last decade made possible by new technology shows that normal adolescent brains are immature – especially the areas of the brain that “govern control of impulsivity, judgment, planning for the future, foresight of consequences, and other characteristics that make people mor-

ally culpable.”<sup>11</sup> Basic anatomy makes juveniles more impetuous.

Also, as a result of this developing brain, most juveniles simply grow out of their impulsive conduct. More than 75 percent of people who commit crimes as juveniles will not commit another crime after they reach age 21. More than 80

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GINGER L. MURRAY, MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE OF LAW 1995, OF LAWTON & CATES, MADISON, IS A BOARD MEMBER OF THE STATE BAR CHILDREN & THE LAW SECTION. SHE SERVES THE DANE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURTS AS GUARDIAN AD LITEM IN CHIPS AND JIPS CASES. SHE PREVIOUSLY WORKED WITH JUVENILE OFFENDERS WHILE SERVING AS THE CRANDON CITY ATTORNEY AND REPRESENTED CLIENTS CHARGED AS JUVENILES AND ADULTS IN HER PRIVATE PRACTICE.

WENDY PAGET HENDERSON, JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY ANALYST WITH THE WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, MADISON, ANALYZES JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY IN LIGHT OF ADOLESCENT BRAIN RESEARCH. SHE COAUTORED THE WCCF PUBLICATION, *RETHINKING THE JUVENILE IN JUVENILE JUSTICE*. SHE IS ACTIVE IN THE COALITION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE AND THE NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE NETWORK, AND HAS PRESENTED ON JUSTICE ISSUES IN WISCONSIN AND NATIONALLY. SHE EARNED HER BA IN PSYCHOLOGY FROM WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY IN CONNECTICUT AND HER LAW DEGREE FROM NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW IN BOSTON.

percent of violent crimes are committed by people over age 20.<sup>12</sup>

Because of juveniles' impulsive brains, the traditional criminal concept of deterrence should not be applied

to adolescents. As the Supreme Court reiterated in *Roper* from its holding in *Thompson*, "the likelihood that the teenage offender has made the kind of cost-benefit analysis that attaches any

weight to the possibility of execution is so remote as to be nonexistent."<sup>13</sup> The Supreme Court then concluded that deterrence is not an adequate justification for imposing the death penalty. Under the analysis applied by the Supreme Court to adolescents' lack of long-term planning and cost-benefit analysis skills, deterrence also should not be a valid reason to try 17-year-olds as adults.

4) **Returning 17-year-olds to juvenile court promotes public safety.** In the mid-1990s, when Wisconsin lowered its age of adult criminal court jurisdiction to 17, the public had come to fear the era of the young "super predator." Predictions that juvenile crime would continue to grow and become more violent never came to fruition. In fact, criminal arrests in Wisconsin (and in the nation) went down consistently from the mid-1990s to 2005.

Several large-scale studies have compared recidivism rates for matched pairs of adolescents tried in the juvenile system versus the adult system. In one study, the teens were matched for their crimes, the level of violence of the crimes, their socio-economic status, and a host of other variables that have proven to be related to recidivism. The matched pairs then were studied for their recidivism. It was found that adolescents tried in adult court violate the law again more quickly and with more serious violent crimes than do their counterparts tried in juvenile court.<sup>14</sup> Almost identical findings were seen in a second study. According to the second study's author, "The findings suggest that transfer [to adult criminal court] made little difference in deterring youths from reoffending. Adult processing of youths in criminal court actually increases recidivism rather than [having] any incapacitative effects on crime control and community protection."<sup>15</sup>

5) **The public supports returning 17-year-olds to juvenile court.** A recent poll conducted by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency asked respondents who should make the decision to try a person under age 18 in the criminal court system. Nearly 3 out of 4 respondents (72 percent) said the

## A Typical Juvenile Crime

### The Scenario

Jeff is an A student, a senior in high school, with ambitions to become a doctor some day. He plays sports, stays out of trouble, and generally gets along well with everyone. One day Jeff is at the mall with his girlfriend, and she points out a \$30 pair of earrings she wants. He hints that he might buy them for her birthday, but she really wants them right away. Jeff does not have \$30 on him. He



thinks he will take the earrings and no one will know, and that then he will leave \$30 on the front desk when he saves up the money. He slips the earrings into his pocket. When he walks out, the store security alarm goes off. Before he knows it, Jeff is at the local jail waiting for a bail hearing. He explains that he was planning to pay the money back, but it is too late. He spends two nights in jail until a judge decides he can go home.

Jeff finds out the hard way that 17-year-olds are all tried as adults in Wisconsin, no matter how minor the crime they commit. As he sits in jail, he thinks of all the long nights he has spent studying to get into a good college and wonders what his prospects are now. He can't explain what he was thinking when he stole the earrings, other than that he didn't think he would get caught and he thought he could pay back the store without missing the jewelry.

### Juveniles Have Undeveloped Brains

Why would Jeff, such a smart kid, do such a stupid thing? As the American Medical Association wrote recently in a brief to the U.S. Supreme Court:<sup>1</sup>

"The adolescent's mind works differently from ours. Parents know it. This court has said it. Legislatures have presumed it for decades or more. And now, new scientific evidence sheds light on the differences."

Recent research in brain development shows that the areas of the brain associated with risk assessment, impulse control, long-term planning, and decision making are the last areas to develop in the adolescent brain. While Jeff, like most 17-year-olds, has reached his full intellectual capacity, the parts of his brain that govern psycho-social development will not be fully developed until he is in his early to mid-20s.

AMA Amicus Brief, *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005).

decision should be made by the juvenile court judge. Only 14 percent said the legislature, and 9 percent said the prosecutor.

The poll also shows that more than 80 percent of the responding public believe that rehabilitative services and treatment can prevent future crime and will save tax dollars in the long run. The responding public had little faith in the value of adult correctional facilities, with 70 percent believing that putting minors in adult correctional facilities makes them more likely to commit future crimes, and less than 32 percent believing that putting minors in an adult facility will deter them from committing future crimes.

A multidisciplinary group of state-wide organizations currently is working to create the proposed legislation to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction. These groups include the State Bar of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin County Human Services Association, the State Public Defender, the Wisconsin Juvenile Court Intake Workers' Association, the Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies, Wisconsin Education Association Council One, Wisconsin Chapter of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Wisconsin Chapter of American Federation of Teachers, juvenile court judges, and various other county leaders.

### Your Involvement Matters

Members of the legislature and your community need to hear from you. Please contact your legislators to share your views on this very important matter. Contact information for members of the Wisconsin Legislature is at its comprehensive Web site, [www.legis.state.wi.us/](http://www.legis.state.wi.us/).

For more information about the proposal or talking points, contact Wendy Henderson at (608) 284-0580, ext. 308, or email [whenderson@wccf.org](mailto:whenderson@wccf.org).

## State Bar Supports Raising the Age at Which a Person is Subject to Circuit or Municipal Court Jurisdiction

The State Bar Board of Governors at its meeting on March 9, 2007, adopted a public policy position at the request of the Children & the Law Section supporting legislation to raise from 17 to 18 the age at which persons are subject to adult court.

Since the introduction of Assembly Bill 82 last legislative session (which would have returned 17-year-olds to the juvenile court), the Children & the Law Section, in partnership with the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, has been working to garner legislative support for this proposal.

Section members Eileen Hirsch, State Public Defenders Office, and Ginger Murray Lawton & Cates, both of Madison, spoke to the board.

"For better than 100 years, 17-year-olds were initially brought into the juvenile system; however, in 1996 Wisconsin enacted a law that said all 17-year-olds in the criminal system would automatically be charged as adults," Murray said. "The initiative to treat kids under 18 as kids and not as adults is not new. In 2002, the ABA resolved seven different positions regarding juveniles being treated as juveniles. They based their resolution on a 2001 report of the Task Force on Youth and the Criminal System of the ABA Criminal Justice Section. The American Medical Association agrees. Wisconsin is one of only 13 states that currently treat kids under 18 as adults for criminal purposes."

Hirsch pointed out, "This legislation does not prevent kids from being waived to adult court on serious crimes, and the most common category of 17-year-olds charged with crimes is disorderly conduct."

The Criminal Law Section actively supports this legislation, and the Public Interest Law Section supports it in principle. A bill will be introduced this fall to return 17-year-olds to juvenile court.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>AMA Amicus Brief, *Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005).

<sup>2</sup>*Roper v. Simmons*, 543 U.S. 551 (2005).  
<sup>3</sup>*Id.* at 569.

<sup>4</sup>*Bellotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622, 634 (1979).

<sup>5</sup>*Eddings v. Oklahoma*, 455 U.S. 104, 115-16 (1982).

<sup>6</sup>Wis. Stat. § 48.375(1)(a)1.

<sup>7</sup>Wis. Stat. § 990.01(20).

<sup>8</sup>Wis. Stat. § 756.02.

<sup>9</sup>Wis. Stat. § 765.02.

<sup>10</sup>Wis. Stat. § 48.375.

<sup>11</sup>National Institutes of Mental Health, "Teenage Brain: A Work in Progress," April 3, 2004.

<sup>12</sup>T. Moffit, *Juvenile Delinquency: Seed of a Career in Violent Crime, Just Sowing Wild Oats or Both?* (Washington, CD: Federation of Behavioral & Cognitive Sciences, 1994).

<sup>13</sup>*Roper*, 543 U.S. at 572 (quoting *Thompson v. Oklahoma*, 487 U.S. 815, 837 (1988)).

<sup>14</sup>Jeffrey Fagan, *The Comparative Advantage of Juvenile vs. Criminal Court Sanctions on Recidivism Among Adolescent Felony Offenders*, 18 Law & Policy, 1 (Jan. 1996), 2 (April 1996).

<sup>15</sup>Donna M. Bishop et al., *The Transfer of Juveniles to Criminal Court: Does It Make a Difference?*, 42 Crime & Delinquency (1996). □





# ADULTS OR KIDS?

States debate what the best response is to teenagers who commit crimes.

BY SARAH HAMMOND

**W**hen teenagers break the law, do they need rehabilitation or punishment? For several years in the 1990s, state lawmakers decided to treat young lawbreakers as adults, sending them to prison with tough sentences. In recent years, however, some states are rethinking the wisdom of such punishment.

Last session, Connecticut, which automatically tried 16- and 17-year-olds in adult court—giving it the largest number of inmates under the age of 18—changed course.

What the public didn't know, says Connecticut Representative Toni Walker, was that "only 3 percent of these young people are dangerous."

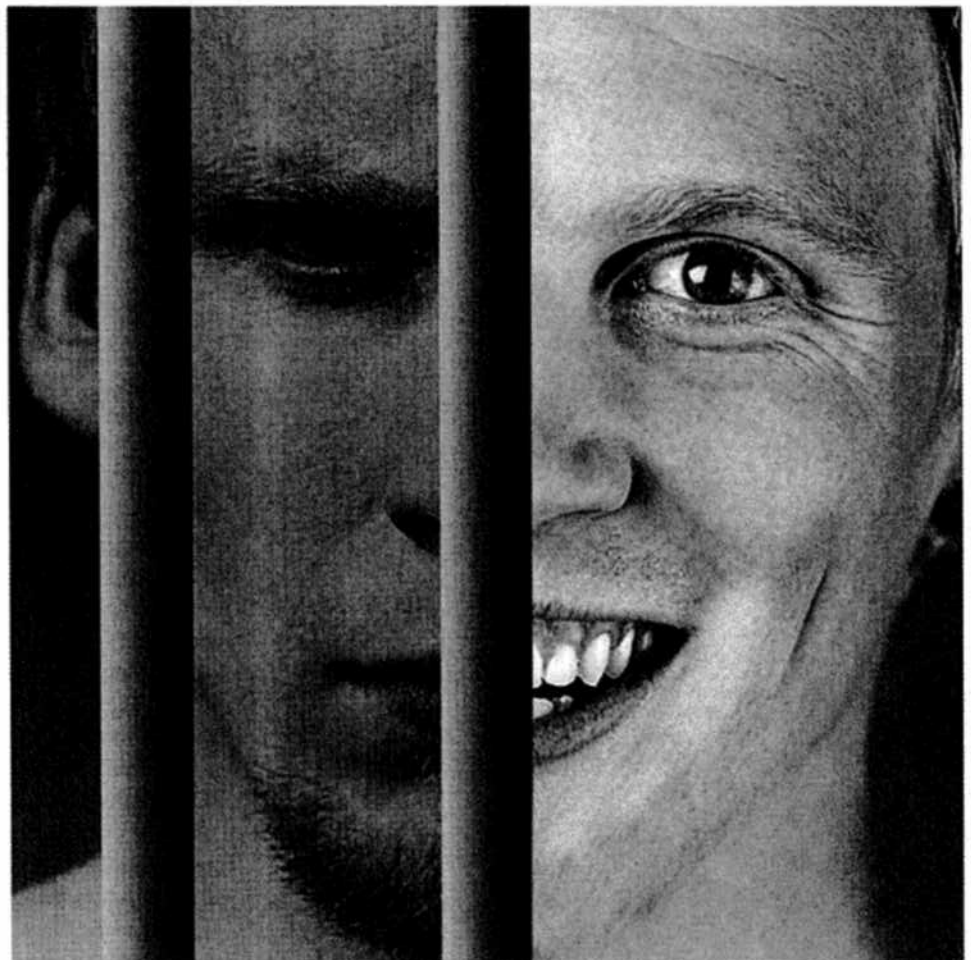
For years, Representative Walker has been trying to change Connecticut's treatment of youths in the criminal justice system. The process was arduous. Members of the Juve-



**REPRESENTATIVE  
TONI WALKER  
CONNECTICUT**

nile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee, which Walker chairs, looked at the number of kids involved in the system. They talked with local police chiefs, children's advocates, lawyers, judges and staff from the departments of Children and Families and of Corrections. They examined what was working in other states.

What really turned lawmakers around, Walker says, was learning that high school drop-outs are often the same kids ending up



in the criminal justice system. When kids aren't in school, they get in trouble, she says. The majority of young people tried as adults in Connecticut are arrested for minor, non-violent crimes such as drug possession, fighting and disorderly conduct. "We realized it was finally time to take action," she says.

Last year, the legislature raised the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 16 to 18, returning 16- and 17-year-olds to the juvenile system starting July 1, 2009.

"The 'adultification' of young people who commit crimes has become a significant part of many states' anti-crime policies even though research shows that it harms children

and does not improve public safety," says Walker.

She says the new law places Connecticut at the forefront of a trend to reduce the number of youth sent to the adult system. At the same time, it will create safer communities by strengthening the juvenile justice system where education and treatment is emphasized over punishment. "The end result of this effort is a product of statewide collaboration and is expected to save tax dollars over time," Walker says. Young offenders will have more opportunity to be rehabilitated in the juvenile system and not as likely to re-offend, thus reducing crime and the costs

*Sarah Hammond specializes in juvenile justice and victims' issues for NCSL.*

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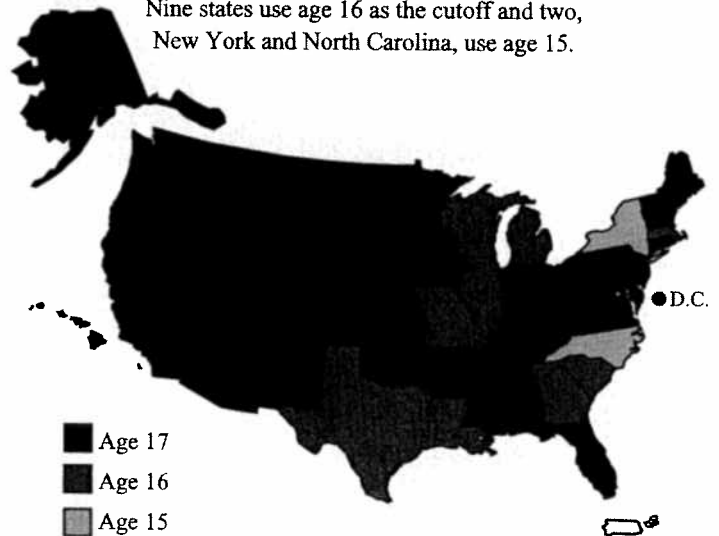


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## DECIDING WHO CAN BE TRIED AS A JUVENILE

There is no uniform maximum age for juvenile courts in all 50 states. Each legislature defines who is eligible for juvenile and adult courts. But the majority of states (39), now including Connecticut, send teens through age 17 to juvenile court.

Nine states use age 16 as the cutoff and two, New York and North Carolina, use age 15.



Many states have higher upper ages of juvenile court jurisdiction in status offense, abuse, neglect or dependency matters—typically through age 20.

associated with crime.

“Holding kids accountable is an important component of rehabilitation,” Walker says. “There are still penalties in place for kids who commit crimes. But we will hold them accountable in a setting that’s designed to improve their behavior rather than exacerbate it. Sending kids to adult prisons is a great way to create adult criminals.”

### WHAT WORKS?

There are still those who contend that safety must be No. 1 as legislatures update juvenile justice systems or send juveniles to adult court.

They argue that juvenile offenders have become more violent. Kids are using guns instead of knives and knives instead of fists. Additionally, drug sales and substance abuse are widespread. A dangerous mix of guns, gangs and drugs have become endemic to our society and now cross over from cities into suburban areas.

States have ways to try juveniles in adult court when the crime is particularly heinous. All but Nebraska, New Mexico and New York use judicial waiver, meaning a juvenile court judge can send a case to adult criminal court based on the circumstances of the offender or the alleged act. Twenty-nine states have statutory exclusion which automatically keeps certain juvenile offenders, usually based on age and offenses, from being tried in juvenile court. Fifteen states allow concurrent jurisdiction, sometimes called prosecutorial discretion or direct-file, which lets prosecutors decide how to file charges in many cases. Most states have some combination of these mechanisms.

### OTHER RECENT STATE ACTIONS

After approving an executive proposal in 2006 that decreased the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 17 to 16, Rhode Island lawmakers reversed the action this session, keeping 17-year-olds in juvenile court.

Lawmakers in Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina and Wisconsin have debated legislation to raise their ages in the past two years, but the measures did not move forward.

In Virginia a new measure, however, did change the "once an adult, always an adult" law. Previously, a one-time transfer of a youth to adult court was enough to keep that teen in the adult system for all future proceedings, no matter how minor the charge, even if he was acquitted or had the case dismissed. The new law requires that youth must now be convicted of an offense when they are transferred to adult court in order to be tried in adult court for all future offenses.

Another way states are rethinking adult treatment of young people is by focusing on how and when to protect the confidentiality of juvenile records for schooling, employment or other transitions to adulthood. New laws in Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico and New York deal with the protection of juvenile records.

Only three states have lowered the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction in recent years. This is considered a drastic step because it moves an entire age group of adolescents into the adult system. Wyoming did so in 1993, moving 18-year-olds to adult court. New Hampshire and Wisconsin changed their systems in 1996, moving 17-year-olds to adult court. But in 2007, New Hampshire voted to again consider 17-year-olds juveniles.

#### SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Although there are some juveniles who truly need to be incarcerated, it is often circumstances, such as child abuse, neglect or poverty, that lead to criminal behavior, says Representative Walker. "The key to treating youthful offenders is effective 'habilitation,' not rehabilitation."

A Center for Disease Control Prevention Task Force found that juveniles who enter the adult justice system, on average, commit more violent crimes following release than juveniles retained in the juvenile justice system. Researchers at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice found that adolescents processed in New York adult courts, which they enter at age 16, were more likely to be re-arrested more often and more quickly for serious offenses than those in New Jersey, where youth are kept out of adult court until age 18.

And the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau reported that young criminals coming out of Wisconsin's prisons are even more likely to re-offend and end up back behind bars than their adult counterparts.

#### THE ROAD AHEAD

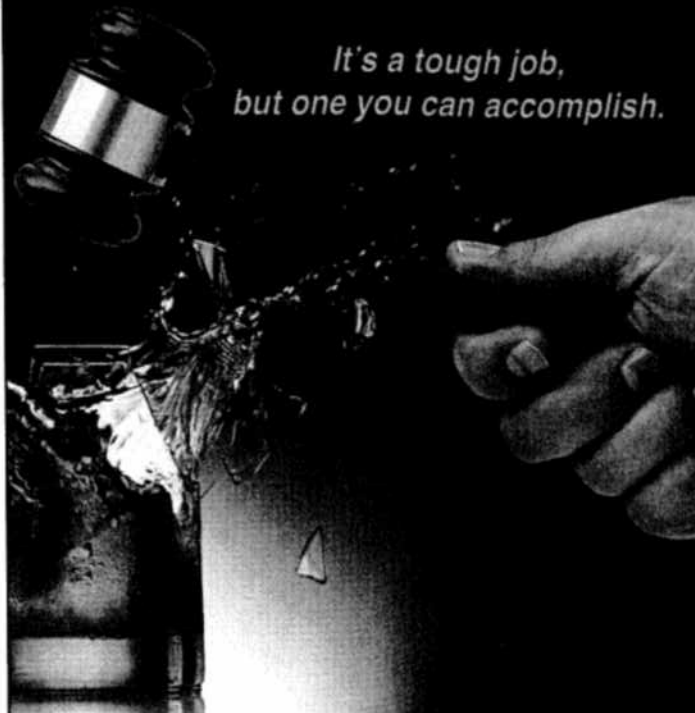
Growing research along with analysis of state data can help guide states as they make critical judgments about when young criminals should be treated as adults. The change in the age of juvenile jurisdiction in Connecticut will move more than 10,000 new cases a year from the adult criminal justice system to the juvenile justice system. This was one of the challenges facing Representative Walker as she pushed the law through.

"As states face the fiscal burdens of growing prison populations, public safety concerns and the desire to prevent juvenile offenders from becoming career criminals," she says, "I hope other states consider Connecticut's experience."

**CHECK OUT** each state's options to impose adult sanctions on juvenile offenders at [www.ncsl.org/magazine](http://www.ncsl.org/magazine).

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## **Audit: Juvenile sentencing opens revolving door**

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press  
February 1, 2008

Young criminals coming out of Wisconsin prisons are more likely to reoffend and end up back behind bars than their adult counterparts, according to a state report released Friday.

The Legislative Audit Bureau's study found 17-year-offenders released from prison in 2002 and 2003 were reincarcerated at more than double the rate of adult offenders released those years. They were reincarcerated at nearly twice the rate of offenders released from juvenile institutions.

The report also found less than half of the roughly 10,500 17-year-olds sentenced to probation between 2002 and 2006 completed it successfully.

The study again highlights questions about whether 17-year-olds are too young to do time in the adult prison system. The findings reflect national research that shows young offenders tend to reoffend when treated as adults, said Shay Bilchik, a former Florida prosecutor who heads the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University.

"They have hit on an issue that isn't peculiar to Wisconsin," Bilchik said. "We're not getting outcomes that lead to greater public safety and we're not getting outcomes for a chance for a law-abiding, productive life for these kids."

Politicians across the country moved to lower the age at which their states considered an offender an adult during the 1990s as juvenile crime soared.

Wisconsin enacted a law in 1996 that automatically declared 17-year-olds adults in criminal court. Nine other states also consider 17-year-olds adults.

But some states have reconsidered raising their threshold ages in light of research that indicates teenagers can't control their impulses. Connecticut plans to raise its age from 16 to 18 on Jan. 1, 2010. Illinois, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York and North Carolina have debated legislation to raise their ages in the past two years, but the measures all failed, according to the audit bureau's study.

"This report confirms the need for legislation that would return these teenagers to the juvenile system, where they are much more likely to receive the services they need to help them get their lives back together," said Jill Jacklitz, leader of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families.

Wisconsin legislators introduced a bill to raise the age to 18 in 2005, but the measure failed after opponents complained counties wouldn't be able to handle 17-year-olds in their juvenile justice budgets. The audit bureau report said the change could cost as much as \$82 million.

State Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, introduced a bill last month that would fund the move through a tax on video games. The chances it could pass both the Senate and Assembly before the Legislature adjourns for the year in mid-March are slim, but Erpenbach said the audit proves 17-year-olds don't belong in prison.

"There's just a better way to deal with the kids than in that kind of setting," Erpenbach said.

In a letter responding to the report, state Department of Corrections Secretary Rick Raemisch said the audit bureau used data from his agency that may have been more than a year old. He also contended sample sizes of 17-year-olds were too small to draw any conclusions and every offender who needs rehabilitative treatment in prison is offered it, but not all accept.

Judges have worked hard to send only the worst 17-year-olds to prison, he added.

"It can be argued offenders sentenced to prison pose a high risk to the community and a high risk to further criminal behavior," Raemisch said.

A summary and the full report can be found at <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab>.

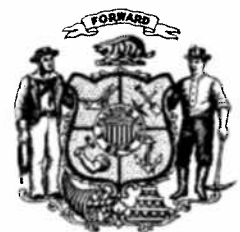
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# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





**Matthews, Pam**

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**From:** Matthews, Pam  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 06, 2008 9:56 AM  
**To:** Matthews, Pam  
**Subject:** Report finds adult sentences for 17-year-old offenders thwarts rehabilitation

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## **Report finds adult sentences for 17-year-old offenders thwarts rehabilitation**

**RiverTown Staff , Wheeler News Service  
Published Wednesday, February 06, 2008**

Since 1995 a 17-year-old who may have committed a criminal act can be tried as an adult in Wisconsin.

A report released Friday by the Legislative Audit Bureau found that since 2002 less than half those 17-year-olds treated as adults successfully completed their probation.

The report also found that these offenders were also more likely to return to prison or another correctional facility than either juvenile or adult offenders.

The findings of the study have ignited the debate over legislation (SB 401), introduced in January, which would place 17-year-olds back in the juvenile system.

"I am concerned about the high level of recidivism rates among the 17-year-olds that are sentenced to adult prison and question the effectiveness of adult prisons to rehabilitate them," said Sen. Jim Sullivan, D-Wauwatosa.

Sullivan co-chairs the Joint Legislative Audit Committee along with Rep. Suzanne Jeskewitz, R-Menomonee Falls.

"Considering the high recidivism rates of young offenders in the adult system, and the uncertainty of services received by those on probation, the long term outlook for these youths to ever become productive and contributing members of society appears dismal," said Jeskewitz.

Wisconsin is presently one of 13 states which allows for 17-year-olds to be tried as adults and to be placed in an adult prison.

One group fighting for the change is the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, which believes putting 17-year-olds into the adult court and correctional system does not help the offenders turn things around.

"This report confirms the need for legislation that would return these teenagers to the juvenile system, where they are much more likely to receive the services they need to help them get their lives back together," said Jill Jacklitz, WCCF executive director.

One of the causes of concern is the cost of moving 17-year-olds back to the juvenile system.

The LAB report estimated the cost would be \$53.5 - \$82.4 million, most of which would be borne by the

counties.

To help pay this additional cost the proposed legislation would put an additional 1 percent sales tax on video games and video gaming equipment.

The bill is being co-sponsored by several senators including local lawmaker Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, D-Alma, who's 31 Senate District includes most of eastern Pierce County.

More information can be found online at the LAB Web site at [www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/](http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/)

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