

National Trends in Juvenile Justice

According to a national census of juveniles in residential placement across the United States in 2013, **only 23% were committed or detained for violent offenses**, a number that has held relatively steady since at least the late 1990s.

Considering young adults:

Emerging adults (ages 18 – 24) make up 10% of the U.S. population but 30% of arrests and 21% of people admitted into the adult system every year.

Young men of color ages 18 to 24 are **7 to 9 times more likely to be incarcerated compared to their white peers.**

Recidivism rates compared to age:

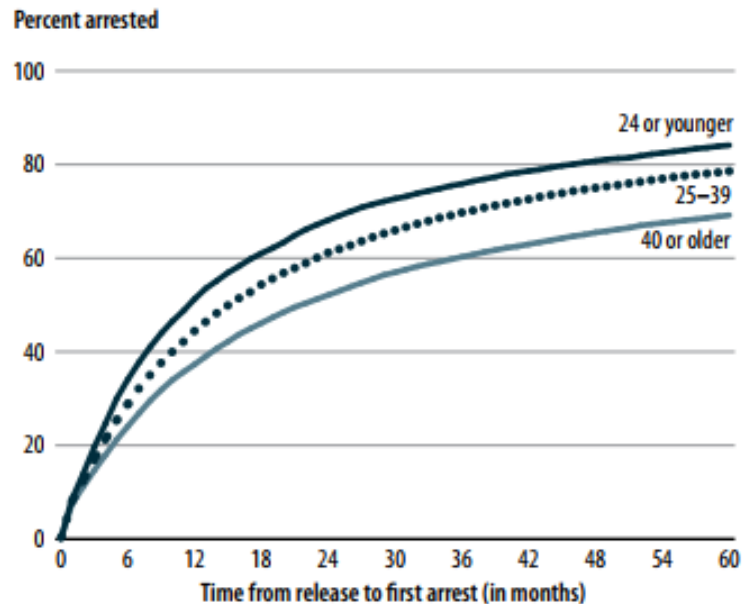
Young adults released from prison are significantly more likely to reoffend than any other age group. One study found that approximately 76% of people who were **under the age of 25** when released from prison were rearrested within three years, and 84% were rearrested within five years.

Transferring youth to the adult justice system is particularly ineffective in reducing future criminal behavior. A recent national meta-analysis found a median increase **of 34% in violent rearrests for youth who are declined** from the juvenile justice system compared to juveniles who are not transferred to the adult criminal system (McGowan et al., 2007).

Behavioral Health Needs:

- Up to 70 percent of incarcerated juveniles meet the criteria for at least one mental disorder and a large proportion of these individuals have co-occurring mental and substance use disorders. Between 75 and 93% of youth entering the JJ system are estimated to have experienced trauma.
- Nationally among youth processed in adult criminal court, 66% had at least one psychiatric disorder and 43% had two or more disorders, and those sentenced to prison were more likely to have a disruptive behavior disorder, a substance use disorder, or co-occurring affective and anxiety disorders (Washburn et al., 2008).
- The suicide rate for youth in adult facilities is significantly higher than the rate among youth in juvenile detention facilities (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).
- Youth who serve their sentences in adult facilities and who receive adult convictions (and cannot seal their records) experience greater barriers in securing education, job and housing opportunities; meanwhile youth in juvenile facilities receive programming that helps them transition to adulthood

Recidivism of prisoners released in 30 states in 2005, by age at release and time from release to first arrest



Note: Prisoners were tracked for 5 years following release. Data on prisoner's age were known for 100% of cases.

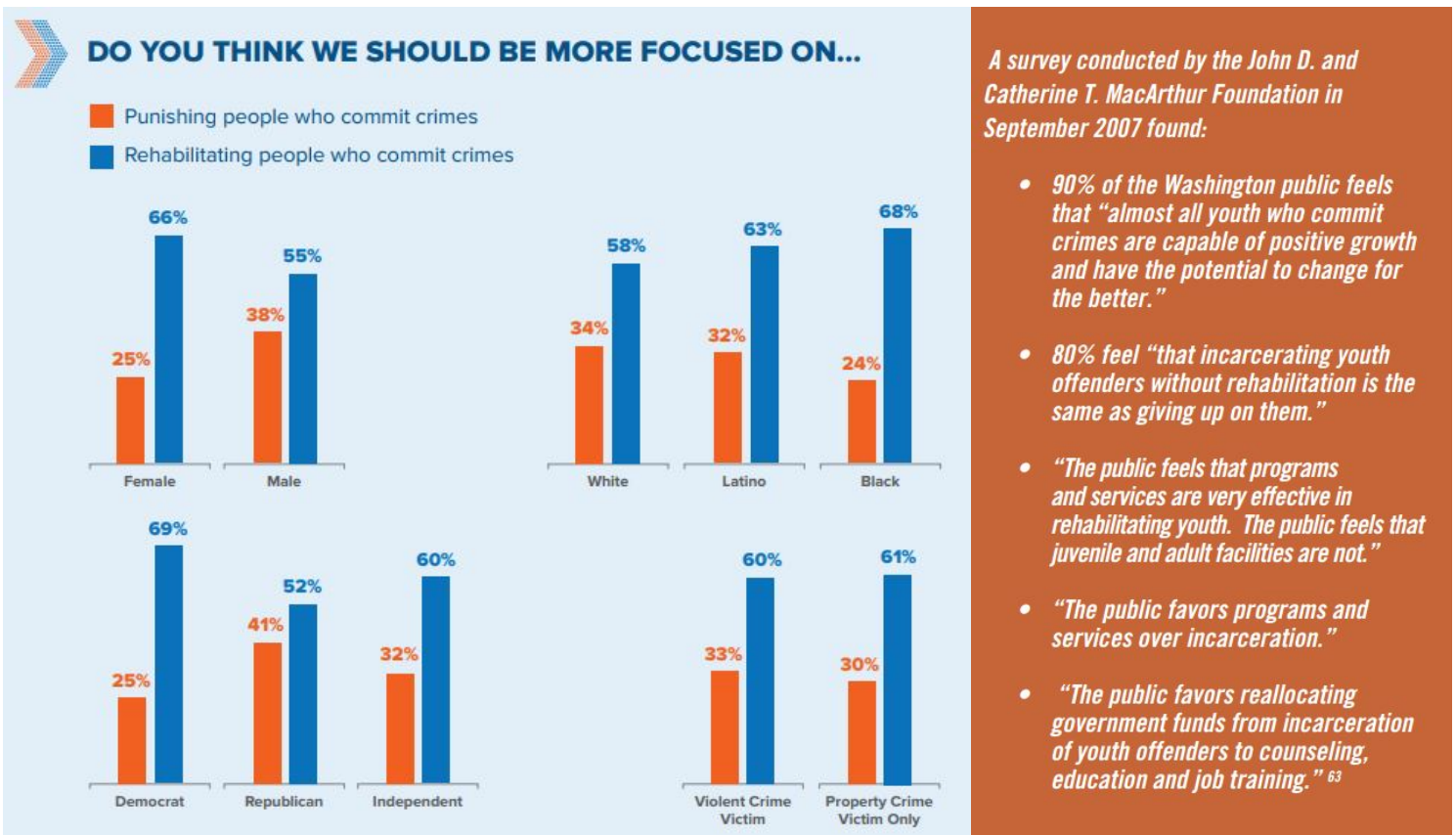
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2005 data collection.

Education:

- Youth who are charged as adults often spend significant time in jail prior to trial and sentencing. Across the state, programming to address the mental health, educational and social needs of juveniles in jails is minimal if youth are awaiting trial in jail facilities compared to juvenile detention centers.
- Many young adults are not required by law to attend school during or after justice system supervision. Almost 60% of states do not publicly fund education services past the age of 21, limiting any young adults' access to the types of accelerated, alternative education programs they need to earn a high school or post-secondary degree and/or workforce credential.

What about crime victims?

- **Seven in 10 victims prefer that prosecutors focus on solving neighborhood problems and crime rates through rehabilitation, even if it means fewer convictions and prison sentences.**
- Victims prefer increased investments in schools and education, job creation and investments in crime prevention and programs for at-risk youth over more investments in prisons and jails.
- **Six in 10 victims** favor investments on prevention and rehabilitation over long prison sentences.



References:

- *Crime Survivors Speak: the first national survey of victims' views on safety and justice*, Alliance for Safety and Justice (2016)
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- *Juvenile Court Statistics 2014*, National Center for Juvenile Justice (2016)
- *Compulsory School Attendance Laws, Minimum & Maximum Age Limits for Requiring Free Education*, National Center for Education (2015)
- *Healing Invisible Words: Why investing in Trauma-informed care for Children Makes Sense*, Justice Policy Institute (2010)
- *Young adult justice in Connecticut*, Vera Institute website