

Giving 17 Year Olds a Second Chance Makes Sense for Wisconsin because it...

Is a Good Investment in Reducing Crime: The research is very clear that 17-year olds dealt with in the juvenile system are less likely to reoffend than similar youth dealt with in the adult system. In fact, both state and national results point to a 1/3 decline in reoffense rates for youth in the juvenile system compared to the adult system. **There is no evidence that prosecuting youth in adult court plays a role in reducing overall youth crime.**

Builds on Evidence about What Works with Youthful Offenders: Brain and developmental research confirms that youth at this age are capable of learning new ways of thinking and behaving. Counties all around the state are implementing evidence-based practices that are proving to be successful in getting youth back on track.

Keeps Parents Involved: Under current law parents of 17-year olds have no legal role or responsibility if their 17-year old is arrested. Law enforcement does not have to contact a parent if your child is arrested or put in jail, parents are not considered legal parties to the court process, they have no financial responsibility for attorney or service costs, and they cannot be required to pay restitution if their child fails to do so. **Dealing with 17 year olds in the juvenile system puts parents back into the process where they belong.**

Contributes to Our Workforce and Economy: Reducing offense rates by 1% yields an estimated \$10 million increase in our state's economic productivity each year.

Has Worked in Other States: Recent changes to the age of adult court in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Illinois have proven that the number of youth and related costs associated with the change have been far below what was projected. **Wisconsin is now only one of nine states that has an adult court age set automatically for youth under 18.**

Takes Advantage of the Existing Capacity in the Juvenile Justice System: Juvenile crime is decreasing across the country and in most Wisconsin counties the caseloads of juvenile justice staff have declined significantly. **Juvenile arrests in Wisconsin (including arrests of 17-year olds) have declined by 46% since 2009, and the number of new juvenile cases filed each year in court has declined by 27%.**

Pays for Itself and Then More: Reduced costs for the adult justice system (law enforcement, courts, and corrections) exceed initial costs associated with providing additional services in the juvenile system.

Is More Efficient than the Adult

System: Imposing consequences and getting services to youth/families in a timely way is important. **The time limits and processes of the juvenile system are much faster than the adult system.**

Has Broad Support: There is support across the political spectrum that we should no longer invest in ineffective correctional policies that do not reduce crime. **We can hold youth accountable while at the same time allow them to become contributing members of our community.**

Supporting Organizations:

- Wisconsin Juvenile Officers Association
- State Bar of Wisconsin
- State Public Defender’s Office
- Disability Rights Wisconsin
- Right on Crime (Texas Public Policy Foundation)
- National Association of Social Workers – WI Chapter
- Wisconsin Association of Child and Family Agencies
- Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

Similar legislation in other states supported by:

- Wisconsin Catholic Conference
- WISDOM
- Wisconsin Council of Churches
- Wisconsin Family Ties
- WI Association for Homeless and Runaway Services
- National Juvenile Justice Network
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency Campaign for Youth Justice

- Assembly Sponsor:** Representative Rob Hutton
- Senate Sponsor:** Senator Jerry Petrowski

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Non-violent first-time
17 YEAR OLD OFFENDERS

belong in the
JUVENILE JUSTICE
system

Teenage offenders need their cases resolved in a speedy manner, so that they can see the connection between their actions and consequences.

But a timely resolution is not something the adult criminal system can offer.

