

Briefing

Strategic Goal: Development of Cohesive Policy to Slow Down Crime Factory

Presentation to Join Interim Committee on the Family Code

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by

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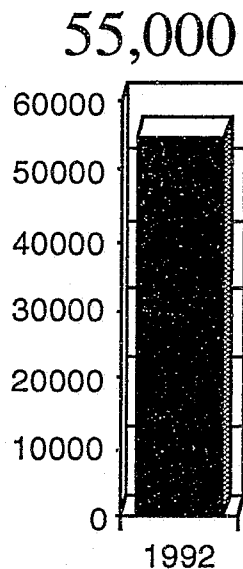
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Outline

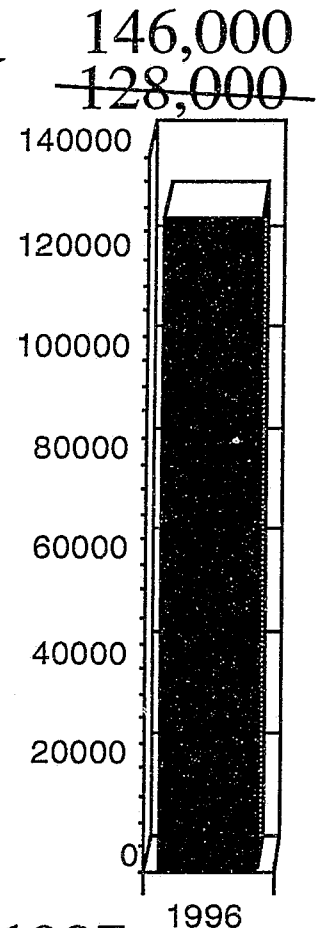
- Texas is in the midst of one of the most far-reaching reforms of a criminal justice system in the nation, as well as one of the largest prison construction programs in the world
 - Efforts aim to redress an adult criminal justice system that is overwhelmed
- Challenge
 - How can we alter the forces that are feeding this adult system with young offenders?
- Development of cohesive approach guided by three concepts
 - Incentives
 - Diversions
 - Punishment

Reforms Backed by Largest Correctional Expansion in the Nation

State Incarceration Capacity to
More than Double in Four Years



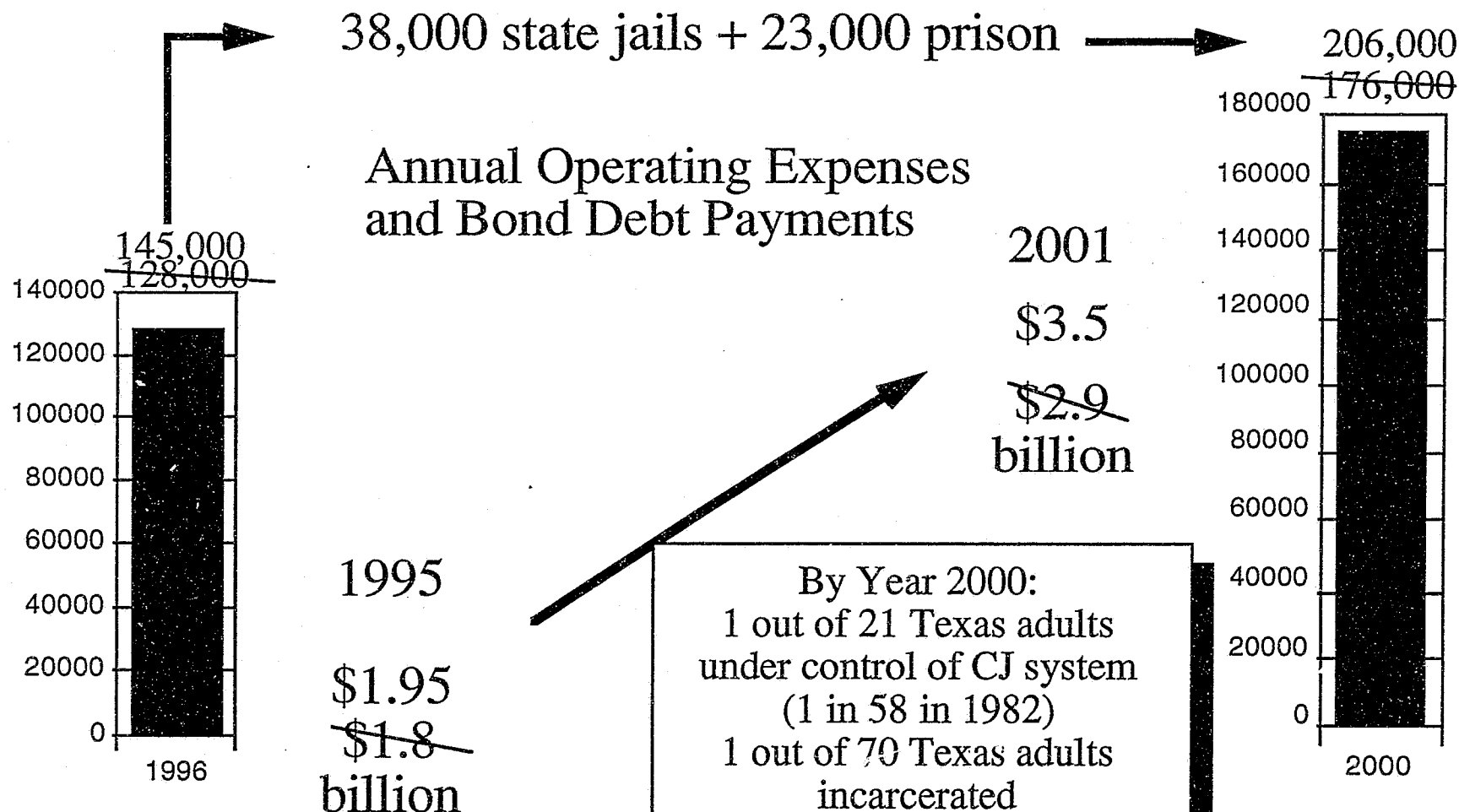
- Approximately 40,000 beds in prison and transfer facilities
- 12,000 incarceration beds dedicated to substance abuse treatment
- 24,000 beds in state jails
- 15,000 beds/emergency authorization by board



1.987 billion in construction costs since 1987

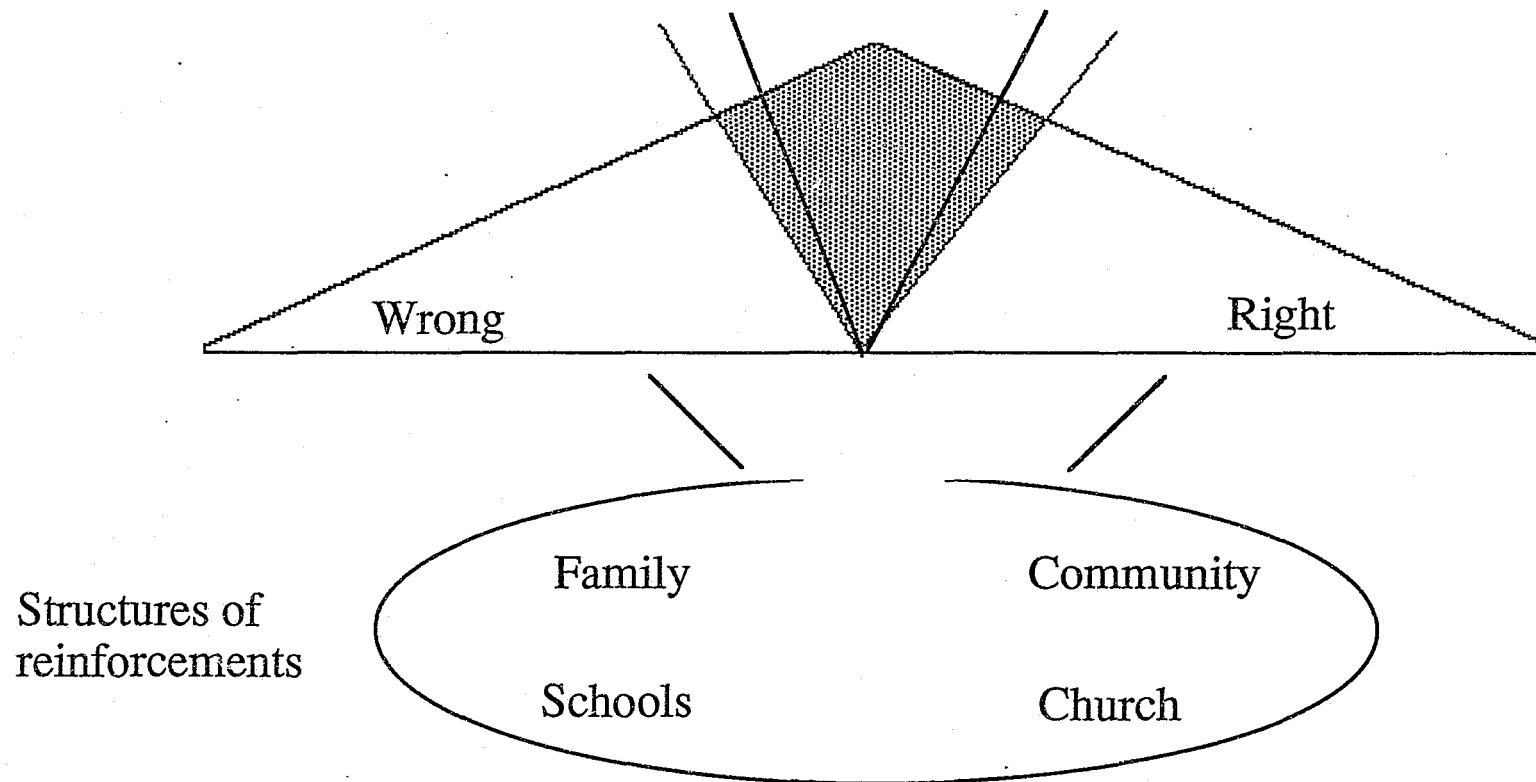
921 million increase in operations budget in 94-95

Projected Expansion to Accommodate Growth

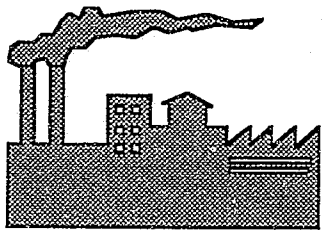


Crime as a Moral/Ethical Issue

Gray Area Expanding- Crisis of Culture
"Don't Blame Me" Values



Three Guiding Principles



Encourage youth who live and play by society's rules and laws to continue to do so - incentives

- Prevention
- Neighborhood and school safety

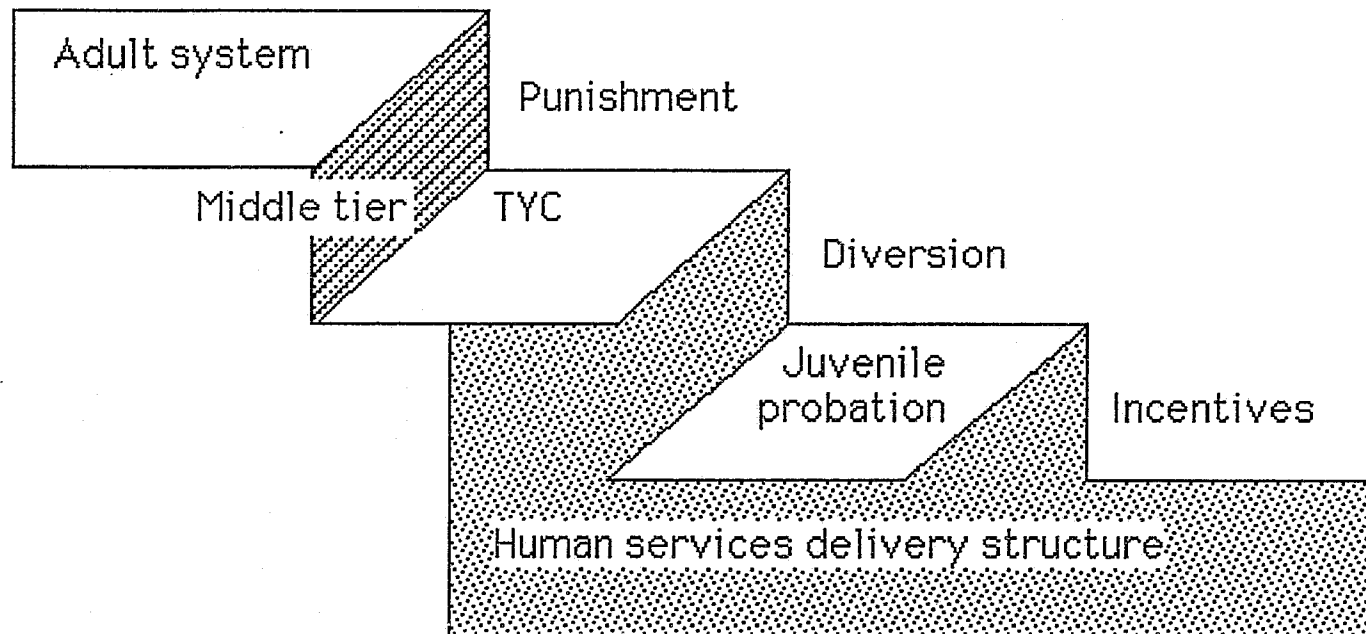
Influence those who break some rules to act responsibly again - diversions

- Alternative schools and juvenile probation

Fairly and effectively punish youth who commit violent acts and offenses - punishment

Policy Goal: Set a Continuum of Incentives and Disincentives

Control and incapacitation



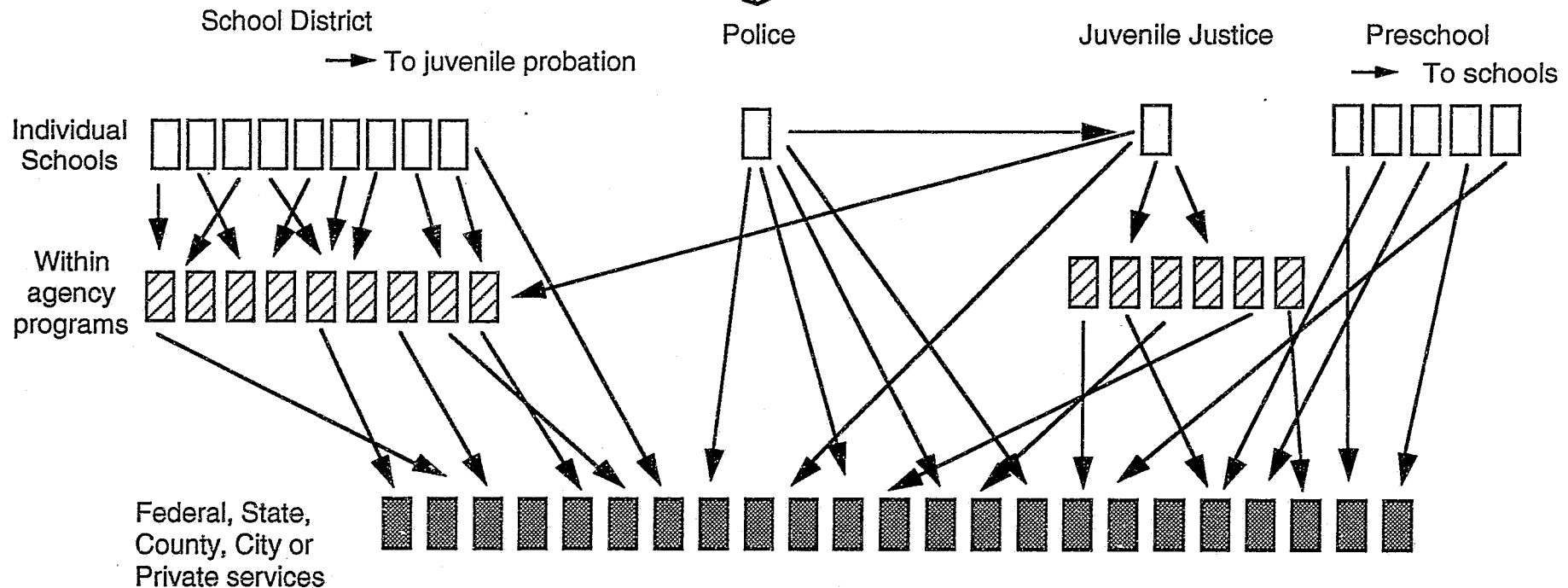
Human services delivery structure affect effectiveness of continuum

Can Service Delivery Structure Be More Rational and Accountable?

- Categorization: Children defined "at-risk" by different agencies with different criteria based on program categories
- Crisis orientation: No emphasis on "families-at-risk" for prevention and intervention purposes
- Specialization of services: Overlapping problems may not be addressed rendering specific intervention ineffective
- Eligibility: Multiple requirements are confusing and discourage participation and effective use of limited resources
- Access: Location and hours of different services may make accessibility difficult
- Accountability: No follow-up accountability for participation from clients or for outcomes from agencies

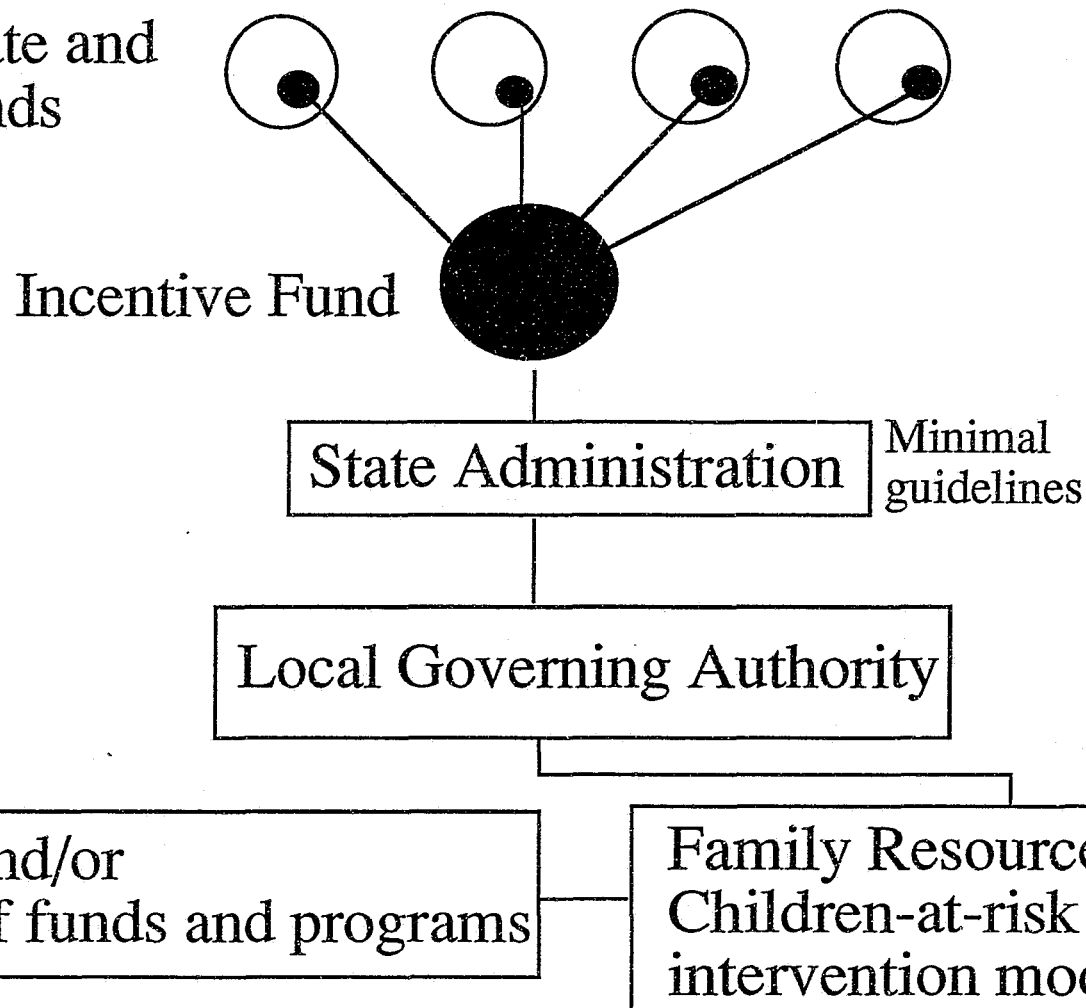


Sources of referral:

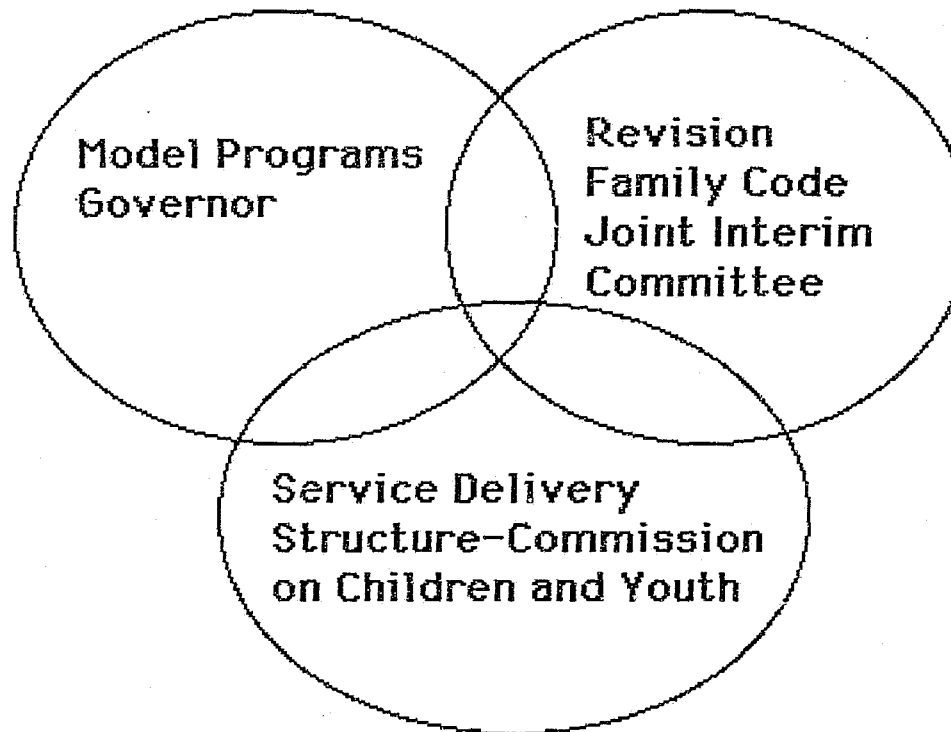


Incentive Funds for Community Empowerment

Present state and federal funds



Cohesive Strategy Among Policy Groups Essential



Issues to be Examined Related to the Juvenile Justice System

- Incentives
 - Expanded Use of School Facilities
 - Can efficiency and cost effectiveness be increased by expanding after school care and recreational activities in existing school facilities?
 - Review child care licensing requirements to facilitate volunteer participation in after school programs
- Diversions
 - Role of District Attorney
 - Should certain juvenile offenses be automatically referred to the District Attorney's Office for review and decision on prosecution?
 - Under present system, juvenile probation officers can "counsel and release" or place a child on informal probation without referring the case to the prosecutor
 - Should all failed "informal adjustments" be referred to the prosecutor for formal adjudication?
 - Increase Accountability of Children and Parents
 - Should judges be given more tools to order parents and children to attend services?
 - Should community service and restitution be made mandatory for all informal adjustments and formal adjudications?

Juvenile Justice System (cont.)

- Diversions (cont.)
 - Intermediate Sanction Facilities and Programs
 - Should the state fund the development of programs which make use of existing or expanded detention or community residential placements for juveniles in violation of their court ordered probation?
 - Would an expansion of certain diversion programs and services serve to reduce minority commitments to TYC?
 - These programs would provide a community based option for juveniles who would otherwise be committed to TYC
- Punishments
 - Certification of Juveniles as Adult
 - Should there be automatic certification of a juvenile as an adult for certain criminal offenses?
 - Should the certification process be streamlined?
 - What should be the minimum age for certification as an adult?
 - Once certified should a juvenile be automatically returned to adult court (grand jury) for subsequent offenses?
 - Determinate Sentencing
 - Should the present determinate sentencing system for juveniles be modified and/or expanded?

Juvenile Justice System (cont.)

- Structural Issues
 - Parole and Aftercare Services
 - Should parole and aftercare services for TYC juveniles be provided by local juvenile probation departments?
 - TYC Capacity
 - Should TYC capacity be expanded to facilitate minimum lengths of stay sufficient to provide rehabilitative services?
 - Confidentiality
 - Should the state allow computerized criminal history records to be created for juvenile offenders as is done for adults?
 - Should the adult system have access to these records?
 - What should be the scope of this initiative?
 - What agencies should have authorized access to this information?

Conclusion

- The importance of your task
 - Without a concerted effort to disrupt the flow of young offenders from society's crime factory, our efforts to combat crime are limited
 - You cannot solve all the problems facing young Texans but you can design state policies and programs that really help
 - A projected increase in the state population age 10-24 ("at-risk" crime population) makes it imperative that the state design an effective cohesive approach to youth and juvenile issues in this decade