



OJJDP

Shay Bilchik, Administrator

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JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Juvenile Arrests 1998

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In 1998, law enforcement agencies in the United States made an estimated 2.6 million arrests of persons under age 18.* According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), juveniles accounted for 18% of all arrests and 17% of all violent crime arrests in 1998. The substantial growth in juvenile violent crime arrests that began in the late 1980's peaked in 1994. In 1998, for the fourth consecutive year, the total number of juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses—murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—declined. Specifically, between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses fell 19%, compared with just a 6% decline for adults. However, even with this substantial decline, the number of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests in 1998 was still 15% above the 1989 level. In comparison, the number of adult arrests for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1998 was just 3% greater than in 1989.

These findings are derived from data reported annually by local law enforcement agencies across the country to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. Based on these data, the FBI prepares its annual *Crime in the United States* report, which summarizes crimes known to the police and arrests made during the reporting calendar year. This information is used to characterize the extent and nature of juvenile crime that comes to the attention of the justice system. Other recent findings from the UCR Program are:

- ◆ Of the nearly 2,000 juveniles murdered in 1998, 48% were killed with a firearm, down from 56% in 1997.
- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 12% of murder arrests, 14% of aggravated assault arrests, 35% of burglary arrests, 27% of robbery arrests, and 24% of weapons arrests in 1998.
- ◆ Juvenile murder arrests increased substantially between 1987 and 1993. In the peak year of 1993, there were about 3,800 juvenile arrests for murder. Between 1993 and 1998, juvenile arrests for murder declined, with the number of arrests in 1998 (2,100) about half that in 1993.
- ◆ Between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for burglary declined 17% and juvenile arrests for motor vehicle theft declined 40%.
- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 13% of all drug abuse violation arrests in 1998. Between 1989 and 1998, juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations increased 86%.
- ◆ Juvenile arrests for curfew and loitering violations increased 178% between 1989 and 1998. In 1998, 27% of curfew arrests involved juveniles under age 15 and 30% involved females.
- ◆ In 1998, 58% of arrests for running away from home involved females and 40% involved juveniles under age 15.
- ◆ Arrests of juveniles accounted for 12% of all violent crimes cleared by arrest in 1998—specifically, 6% of murders, 11% of forcible rapes, 16% of robberies, and 12% of aggravated assaults.

From the Administrator

A decade of public attention to the problem of juvenile violence is bearing fruit. The reduction in violent juvenile crime is reflected in arrest data for 1998. Juvenile arrests for violent crime are 19% below their peak in 1994. The number of juvenile arrests for murder decreased 48% from 1994 to 1998. The number of juvenile arrests for each violent crime category and the percentage of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrests also have declined—despite continuing growth in the juvenile population.

Such good news, however, should not foster complacency nor lead us to weaken our efforts to combat violent juvenile crime, which despite decreases is still too prevalent. Rather, we need to build on these accomplishments with the implementation of additional effective prevention programs and a stronger juvenile justice system. This type of response will further reduce the level of juvenile violence that endangers our communities and will address other problem behaviors that prevent youth from achieving their potential.

Juvenile Arrests 1998 provides a summary and analysis of national and State juvenile arrest data reported in the FBI's October 1999 report, *Crime in the United States 1998*. With sound information such as this and a solid commitment to supporting healthy, law-abiding youth, we can continue to make progress in reducing juvenile crime.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

* Throughout this Bulletin, persons under age 18 are referred to as juveniles. See Notes on page 12.

What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this Bulletin properly, the reader must have a clear understanding of what these statistics count. The arrest statistics report the number of arrests made by law enforcement agencies in a particular year—not the number of individuals arrested, nor the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not equivalent to the number of people arrested, because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once in the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent counts of crimes committed by arrested individuals, because a series of crimes committed by one individual may culminate in a single arrest, or a single crime may result in the arrest of more than one person. This latter situation, where many arrests result from one crime, is relatively common in juvenile law-violating behavior, because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. This is the primary

reason why arrest statistics should not be used to indicate the relative proportion of crime committed by juveniles and adults. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of flow into the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Arrest statistics also have limitations for measuring the volume of arrests for a particular offense. Under the UCR Program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify an arrest by the most serious offense charged in that arrest. For example, the arrest of a youth charged with aggravated assault and possession of a controlled substance would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore, when arrest statistics show that law enforcement agencies made an estimated 205,800 arrests of young people for drug abuse violations in 1998, it means that a drug abuse violation was the most serious charge in these 205,800 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 1998 included a drug charge as a lesser offense.

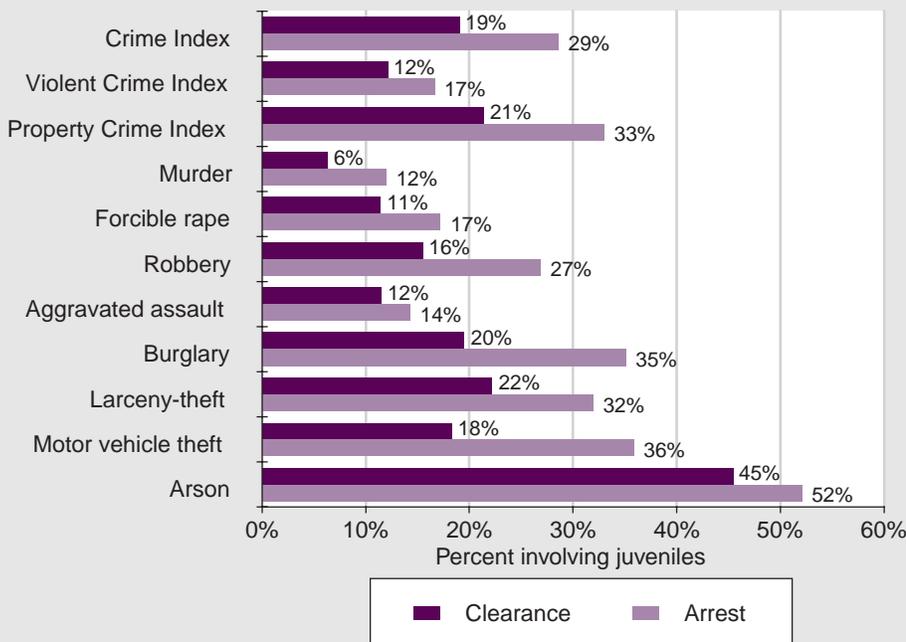
What do clearance statistics count?

Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were resolved by an arrest or other, exceptional means (e.g., death of the offender, unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, one arrest could clear 40 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 40 of these crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if the crime was committed by a group of offenders. For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports information on the proportion of clearances that were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime committed by this age group than is the arrest proportion, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the juvenile proportion of crimes.

For example, the FBI reports that persons under age 18 accounted for 27% of all robbery arrests but only 16% of all robberies that were cleared in 1998. If it can be assumed that offender characteristics of cleared robberies are similar to those of robberies that were not cleared, then it would be appropriate to conclude that persons under age 18 were responsible for 16% of all robberies in 1998. However, the offender characteristics of cleared and noncleared robberies may differ for a number of reasons. If, for example, juvenile robbers were more easily apprehended than adult robbers, the proportion of robberies cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18 would overestimate the juvenile responsibility for all robberies. To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI's reporting guidelines require the clearance to be tied to the oldest offender in the group if more than one person is arrested for a crime.

In summary, while the interpretation of reported clearance proportions is not straightforward, these data are the closest measure generally available of the proportion of crime known to law enforcement that is attributed to persons under age 18. These data should provide a barometer of the changing contribution of persons under age 18 to the Nation's crime problems.

The juvenile proportion of arrests exceeded the juvenile proportion of crimes cleared by arrest in each offense category, reflecting the fact that juveniles are more likely to commit crimes in groups and are more likely to be arrested than are adults



Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), tables 28 and 38.

The U.S. murder rate in 1998 was the lowest since 1967

The primary focus of each *Crime in the United States* report is the estimated number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. Although only a portion of all crimes that occur are reported to law enforcement, those that are provide an assessment of the workloads of the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

The FBI estimates that in 1998, 7,373,900 larceny-thefts, 2,330,000 burglaries, 1,240,800 motor vehicle thefts, 974,400 aggravated assaults, 446,630 robberies, 93,100 forcible rapes, and 16,910 murders were reported to law enforcement agencies. One would have to go back to 1970 to find a lower annual number of murder victims in the United States and to 1967 to find a lower murder rate (i.e., murders per 100,000 persons in the population).

Eighty-eight percent of murder victims in 1998 (or about 14,960 victims) were 18 years of age or older. Fewer adults were murdered in the United States in 1998 than in any year since at least 1976.

In 1998, about 1,960 murder victims were under age 18. This level is substantially below that of the peak year of 1993, when 2,880 juveniles were murdered. However, this decline only returned the level to that of 1988. The number of juveniles murdered in the United States in 1998 was still nearly 300 more than in a typical year between 1980 and 1987.

In 1998, about 920 persons under age 13 were murdered. The number of pre-adolescent murder victims fluctuated within a narrow range between 1980 and 1998, reaching its highest level in 1993 (1,080 victims) and its lowest level in 1984 (810 victims).

In 1998, 65% of all murder victims were killed with a firearm. Adults were more likely to be killed with a firearm (68%) than were juveniles (48%). However, the involvement of a firearm depended greatly on the age of the juvenile victim. While 16% of murdered juveniles under age 13 were killed with a firearm in 1998, 77% of murdered juveniles age 13 or older were killed with a firearm. The most common method for murdering children under the age of 9 was by physical assault.

Although the number of juvenile arrests in 1998—2.6 million—was 1% above the 1994 level, juvenile arrests for violent crime dropped 19%

| Most Serious Offense | 1998 Estimated Number of Juvenile Arrests | Percent of Total Juvenile Arrests | | Percent Change | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| | | Female | Under Age 15 | 1989–98 | 1994–98 | 1997–98 |
| Total | 2,603,300 | 27% | 31% | 24% | 1% | -4% |
| Crime Index total | 708,300 | 26 | 38 | -9 | -18 | -11 |
| Violent Crime Index | 112,200 | 17 | 31 | 15 | -19 | -8 |
| Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter | 2,100 | 8 | 9 | -23 | -48 | -12 |
| Forcible rape | 5,300 | 2 | 37 | -3 | -9 | 0 |
| Robbery | 32,500 | 9 | 25 | 9 | -29 | -17 |
| Aggravated assault | 72,300 | 22 | 33 | 21 | -13 | -3 |
| Property Crime Index | 596,100 | 28 | 39 | -12 | -17 | -11 |
| Burglary | 116,000 | 11 | 38 | -22 | -17 | -9 |
| Larceny-theft | 417,100 | 35 | 41 | -4 | -14 | -12 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 54,100 | 17 | 26 | -39 | -40 | -15 |
| Arson | 9,000 | 11 | 66 | 10 | -24 | -8 |
| Nonindex | | | | | | |
| Other assaults | 237,700 | 31 | 41 | 68 | 10 | 2 |
| Forgery and counterfeiting | 7,100 | 35 | 13 | -2 | -16 | -12 |
| Fraud | 11,300 | 33 | 16 | 44 | -8 | 6 |
| Embezzlement | 1,600 | 42 | 5 | -5 | 56 | 19 |
| Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing) | 33,800 | 13 | 26 | -27 | -27 | -12 |
| Vandalism | 126,800 | 12 | 44 | 9 | -18 | -3 |
| Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.) | 45,200 | 9 | 32 | 15 | -30 | -8 |
| Prostitution and commercialized vice | 1,400 | 50 | 14 | -6 | 18 | 4 |
| Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution) | 15,900 | 7 | 50 | -1 | -5 | -4 |
| Drug abuse violations | 205,800 | 14 | 16 | 86 | 26 | -3 |
| Gambling | 1,600 | 3 | 14 | 86 | -31 | -34 |
| Offenses against the family and children | 10,200 | 37 | 37 | 166 | 103 | 3 |
| Driving under the influence | 21,000 | 17 | 3 | 3 | 39 | 13 |
| Liquor law violations | 157,300 | 30 | 10 | 20 | 39 | 10 |
| Drunkenness | 24,600 | 18 | 13 | 2 | 23 | 2 |
| Disorderly conduct | 183,700 | 28 | 35 | 61 | 20 | -4 |
| Vagrancy | 2,900 | 17 | 26 | -1 | -37 | -17 |
| All other offenses (except traffic) | 453,000 | 25 | 27 | 53 | 20 | 4 |
| Suspicion | 1,300 | 24 | 26 | -56 | -17 | -9 |
| Curfew and loitering | 187,800 | 30 | 27 | 178 | 49 | -3 |
| Runaways | 165,100 | 58 | 40 | -5 | -21 | -15 |

- ◆ In 1998, there were an estimated 2,100 juvenile arrests for murder. Between 1994 and 1998, juvenile arrests for murder declined 48%.
- ◆ Females accounted for 22% of juvenile arrests for aggravated assault and 31% of arrests for simple (i.e., other) assaults. Females represented over half (58%) of all juveniles arrested for running away from home.
- ◆ In the 10-year period between 1989 and 1998, there were substantial declines in the number of juvenile arrests for murder (23%), burglary (22%), and motor vehicle theft (39%) and major increases in arrests for aggravated assault (21%), other assaults (68%), drug abuse violations (86%), and curfew violations (178%).

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), tables 29, 32, 34, 36, and 38. Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

The juvenile share of the crime problem decreased in 1998

The relative responsibility of juveniles for the U.S. crime problem is hard to determine. Studying the proportion of crimes that are cleared by the arrest of juveniles gives one estimate of the juvenile responsibility for crime.

The clearance data in the *Crime in the United States* series show that the proportion of violent crimes attributed to juveniles has declined in recent years. Juvenile involvement in violent crime grew from 9% or 10% in the early 1980's to 14% in 1994 and 1995. Since 1995, the proportion of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrest has declined, reaching 12% in 1998.

The proportion of murders cleared by juvenile arrests peaked in 1994 at 10.5%. In 1998, this figure had dropped to 6.3%, the lowest level since 1987 but still above the 4.6% level of the mid-1980's. The juvenile proportion of cleared forcible rapes peaked in 1995 (15%) and then fell, with the 1998 proportion (11%) the lowest in the decade. The juvenile proportion of robbery clearances in 1998 (16%) was below its peak in 1995 (20%) but above the levels of the early 1980's (12%). Similarly, the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances in 1998 (12%) was below its peak in 1994 (13%) but still above the levels of the early 1980's (9%). The proportion of Property Crime Index offenses cleared by juvenile arrest in 1998 (21%) was 2 percentage points below the average for the years between 1980 and 1997.

In 1998, 27% of juvenile arrests were arrests of females

Law enforcement agencies made 697,000 arrests of females under age 18 in 1998. Between 1994 and 1998, arrests of juvenile females increased more (or decreased less) than male arrests in most offense categories.

| Most Serious Offense | Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests 1994-98 | |
|-----------------------|--|------|
| | Female | Male |
| Robbery | -26 | -29 |
| Aggravated assault | 7 | -18 |
| Burglary | -3 | -18 |
| Larceny-theft | -5 | -17 |
| Motor vehicle theft | -28 | -42 |
| Simple assault | 29 | 4 |
| Vandalism | -5 | -20 |
| Weapons | -20 | -31 |
| Drug abuse violations | 43 | 23 |
| Liquor laws | 47 | 35 |
| Curfew and loitering | 60 | 44 |
| Runaways | -20 | -23 |

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998*, table 35.

Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities

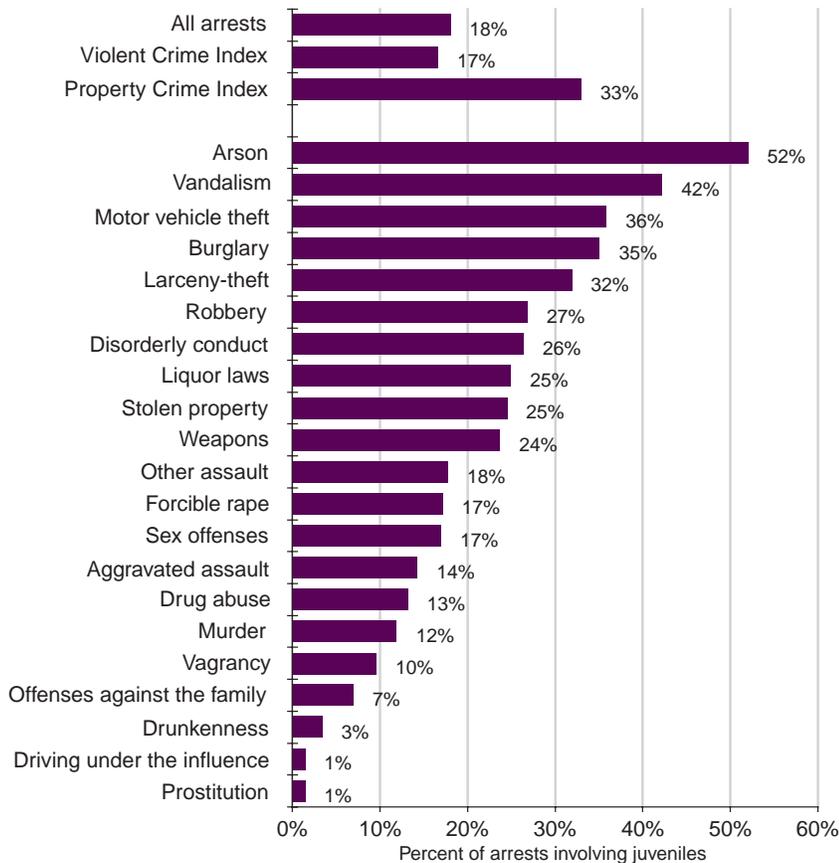
The racial composition of the juvenile population in 1998 was 79% white, 15% black, and 5% other races, with most Hispanics classified as white. In 1998, in contrast to the proportions in the general population, 55% of juvenile arrests for violent crimes involved white youth and 42% involved black youth. To a much lesser extent, black youth were also over-represented in juvenile property arrests, with 27% of these arrests involving black youth and 70% involving white youth.

Most Serious Offense Black Proportion of Juvenile Arrests in 1998

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Murder | 49% |
| Forcible rape | 39 |
| Robbery | 54 |
| Aggravated assault | 37 |
| Burglary | 24 |
| Larceny-theft | 26 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 36 |
| Weapons | 32 |
| Drug abuse violations | 32 |
| Curfew and loitering | 27 |
| Runaways | 18 |

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998*, table 43.

In 1998, juveniles were involved in about 1 in 6 arrests for a violent crime, 1 in 3 arrests for a property offense, and 1 in 4 arrests for a weapons law violation



Note: Running away from home and curfew and loitering violations are not presented in this figure because, by definition, only juveniles can be arrested for these offenses.

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), table 38.

Compared with adult violence, a smaller proportion of juvenile violence was directed toward family members

Within *Crime in the United States 1998*, the FBI released the results of a new study documenting the characteristics of family violence incidents reported to law enforcement. This work is based on data supplied by law enforcement agencies in 14 States through the UCR Program's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The study explored the relationships between victims and their offenders in over 400,000 confrontations in 1998. Although there is no characterization of the findings as nationally representative, the data do represent the experiences of a large number of police agencies.

Overall, the FBI found that about 27% of the victims of violent crimes reported to law enforcement were related to one or more of their offenders. Of these family violence crimes, 94% were classified as assaults (e.g., aggravated assault, simple assault, or intimidation).

Victims were slightly more likely to be female in violent crimes in general (58%) than in crimes classified as family violence confrontations (56%). Victims were as likely to be white in violent crimes in general (74%) as in crimes classified as family violence confrontations (75%). Of all family violence victims, 43% were the offender's spouse or common-law spouse, 11% the offender's child, 9% parents, 9% siblings, and 11% other family members. The remaining 17% of victims were classified by law enforcement as offenders (e.g., family disputes where both husband and wife are charged with assault) and their family relationship was not noted.

Juvenile offenders were involved in 12% of these family violence confrontations. Of all violent crimes committed by juveniles, 18% could be classified as family violence, compared with 31% of violent crimes committed by adult offenders.

The victim was a family member in 18% of all forcible rapes committed by a juvenile or by an adult. When a juvenile was the offender, the victim was a family member in 15% of aggravated assaults, 20% of simple assaults, and 10% of intimidations reported to law enforcement. For crimes by adults, the victim was a family member in 23% of aggravated assaults, 36% of simple assaults, and 18% of intimidations.

Juveniles were the victims in 25% of all violent crimes and 20% of all family violence incidents reported to law enforcement

| Crime Type/ Offender Type | Percent of Juvenile Victims | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | All Violent Crime | Rape | Aggravated Assault | Simple Assault | Intimidation |
| All violent crime | | | | | |
| All offenders | 25% | 58% | 22% | 24% | 17% |
| Juvenile offenders | 66 | 94 | 58 | 67 | 50 |
| Adult offenders | 16 | 49 | 14 | 14 | 11 |
| Family violence confrontation | | | | | |
| All offenders | 20 | 73 | 18 | 16 | 8 |
| Juvenile offenders | 40 | 97 | 34 | 34 | 17 |
| Adult offenders | 17 | 67 | 15 | 14 | 7 |

- ◆ Juveniles were the victims in 58% of all forcible rapes, with 15% of victims under age 12. When the rape occurred between family members, a juvenile was the victim 73% of the time and 39% of all victims were under age 12.
- ◆ Juveniles were the victims in two-thirds (66%) of all violent crimes committed by juvenile offenders, but the victims in only 40% of the violent crimes committed by juveniles against other family members.
- ◆ Juveniles were the victims in 17% of the family violence confrontations perpetrated by adults.

Notes: In this study, crimes of violence include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and intimidation. A crime is classified as a family violence confrontation if the victim is a spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, or in-law. This definition excludes boyfriends, girlfriends, and ex-spouses. Victims may not include all family members who were exposed to the violent incident.

Data source: Analysis of data presented in *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999).

Juvenile offenders were involved in about 1 in 10 family violence assaults reported to law enforcement

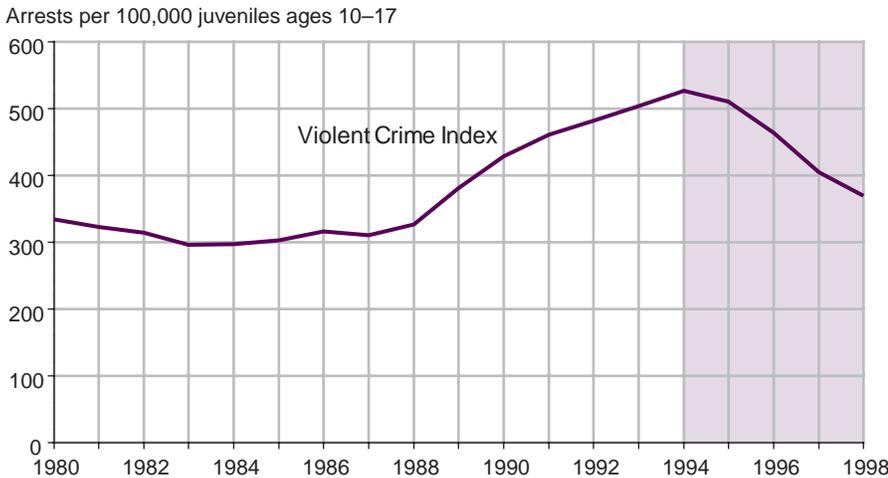
| Crime Type/ Victim Type | Percent of Juvenile Offenders | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | All Violent Crime | Rape | Aggravated Assault | Simple Assault | Intimidation |
| All violent crime | | | | | |
| All victims | 19% | 19% | 18% | 19% | 15% |
| Juvenile victims | 49 | 31 | 48 | 54 | 45 |
| Adult victims | 8 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 9 |
| Family violence confrontation | | | | | |
| All victims | 12 | 19 | 13 | 11 | 9 |
| Juvenile victims | 24 | 25 | 24 | 23 | 19 |
| Adult victims | 9 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 8 |

- ◆ Juveniles were the offenders in less than 1 in 10 violent crimes against adults, even when the crime occurred between family members.
- ◆ In crimes reported to law enforcement, nearly half (49%) of all violent crimes against juveniles were committed by another juvenile. In comparison, when the crime was one of family violence, 76% of the offenders of juvenile victims were adults.

Notes: In this study, crimes of violence include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and intimidation. A crime is classified as a family violence confrontation if the victim is a spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, or in-law. This definition excludes boyfriends, girlfriends, and ex-spouses. Victims may not include all family members who were exposed to the violent incident.

Data source: Analysis of data presented in *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999).

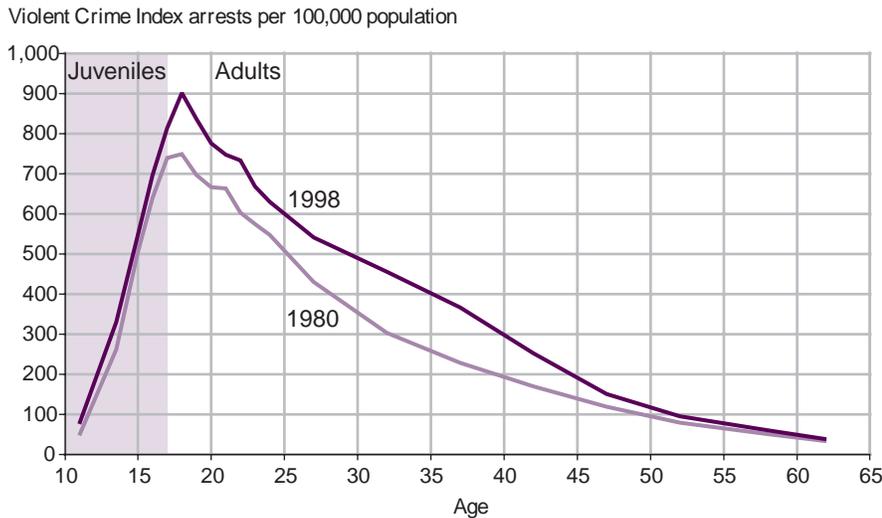
The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate in 1998 was at its lowest level in 10 years—30% below the peak year of 1994



◆ The growth in the juvenile violent crime arrest rate from 1988 to 1994 was largely erased by 1998, with the 1998 rate just 13% above the 1988 level.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

Between 1980 and 1998, Violent Crime Index arrest rates increased for all age groups—but more for adults than juveniles



◆ Between 1980 and 1998, the Violent Crime Index arrest rates for persons ages 15–17 increased about 10%. In comparison, the rates increased more for persons age 18 and older, with the largest increases being for persons between ages 30 and 45. More specifically, the rate increased 20% for persons ages 18–24, 25% for persons ages 25–29, 50% for persons ages 30–34, 60% for persons ages 35–39, and 50% for persons ages 40–44. Even the arrest rate for persons ages 60–64 increased by nearly 20%.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

Juvenile arrests for violence in 1998 were the lowest in a decade

The FBI assesses trends in the volume of violent crimes by monitoring four offenses that are consistently reported by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are pervasive in all geographical areas of the country. These four crimes—murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—together form the Violent Crime Index.

After years of relative stability in the number of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests, the increase in these arrests between 1988 and 1994 focused national attention on the problem of juvenile violence. After peaking in 1994, these arrests dropped in 1995, 1996, 1997, and again in 1998. The number of juvenile arrests in 1998 was the lowest in the 1990's for all Violent Crime Index offenses combined and the lowest since 1987 for murder, 1983 for forcible rape, 1987 for robbery, and 1991 for aggravated assault.

Between 1994 and 1998, the decline in the number of violent crime arrests was greater for juveniles than adults for most violent crime offenses:

| Most Serious Offense | Percent Change in Arrests 1994–98 | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| | Juvenile | Adult |
| Violent Crime Index | -19% | -6% |
| Murder | -48 | -18 |
| Forcible rape | -9 | -14 |
| Robbery | -29 | -14 |
| Aggravated assault | -13 | -3 |

Few juveniles were arrested for violent crime

The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate indicates that in 1998, there were 370 arrests for these violent crimes for every 100,000 youth in the United States between 10 and 17 years of age. If each of these arrests involved a different juvenile (i.e., if each juvenile arrested in 1998 for a Violent Crime Index offense was arrested only once that year—which is unlikely), then no more than 1 in every 270 persons ages 10 through 17 in the United States was arrested for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1998. This means that about one-quarter of 1% of juveniles ages 10–17 were arrested for a violent crime in 1998.

Juvenile arrests for property crimes declined substantially in 1998

As with violent crime, the FBI assesses trends in the volume of property crimes by monitoring four offenses that are consistently reported by law enforcement agencies nationwide and are pervasive in all geographical areas of the country. These four crimes, which form the Property Crime Index, are burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

For the period from 1980 through 1997, during which juvenile violent crime arrests increased and then decreased precipitously, juvenile property crime arrest rates remained relatively constant. Between 1980 and 1997, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate reached its highest level in 1991 (2,610) and its lowest level in 1984 (2,220). Between 1997 and 1998, however, the rate declined 14% and fell to its lowest level in a generation. In 1998, law enforcement made 1,960 arrests for Property Crime Index offenses for every 100,000 youth between 10 and 17 years of age.

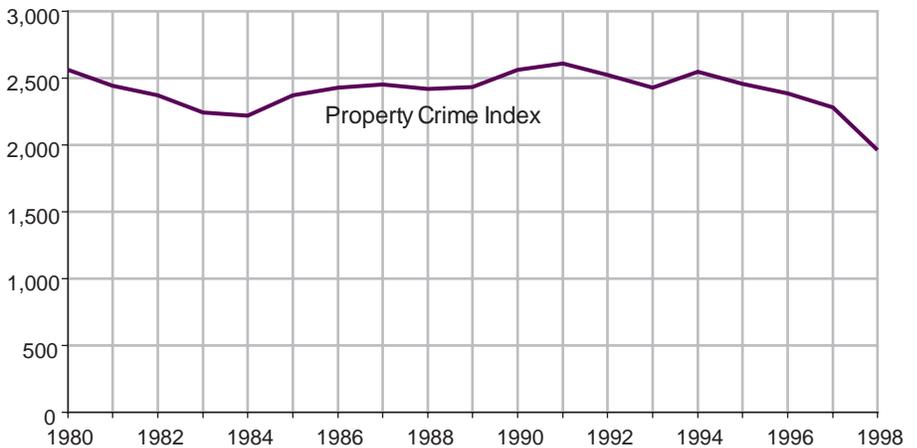
Most arrested juveniles were referred to court

In most States, some persons under age 18 are, due to their age or by statutory exclusion, under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For arrested persons under age 18 and under the original jurisdiction of their State's juvenile justice system, the FBI's UCR Program monitors what happens as a result of the arrest. This is the only instance in the UCR Program in which the statistics on arrests coincide with State variations in the legal definition of a juvenile.

In 1998, 22% of arrests involving youth who were eligible in their State for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within law enforcement agencies, which then released the youth. The FBI reports that 69% of juvenile arrests were referred to juvenile court, and 7% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. The proportion of arrests sent to juvenile court has gradually increased from 1980 to 1998. In 1998, the proportion of juvenile arrests sent to juvenile court was similar in cities and suburban areas (68%) and somewhat greater in rural counties (74%).

The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses in 1998 was at its lowest level since at least 1980

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17

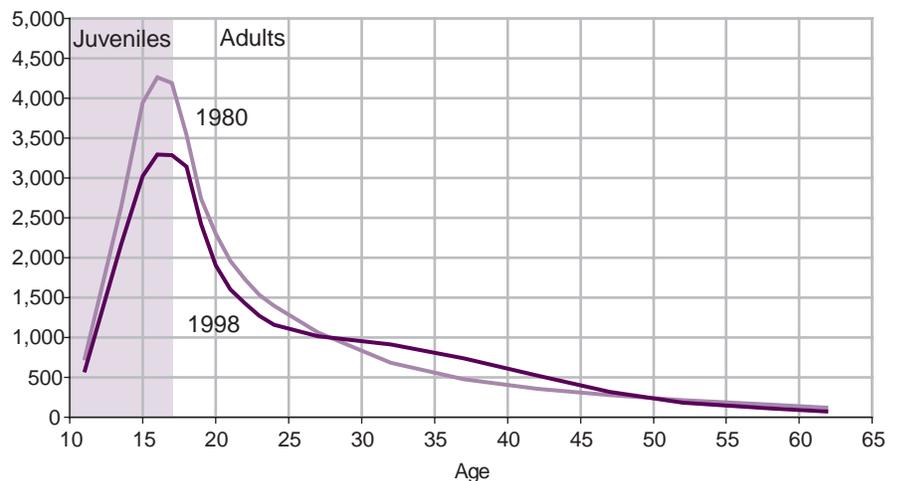


- ◆ In stark contrast to the substantial fluctuations in juvenile violent crime arrest rates between 1980 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses changed relatively little between 1980 and 1998.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

Counter to the violent crime arrest rate patterns, the Property Crime Index arrest rate in 1998 was below the rate in 1980 for all persons under age 25

Property Crime Index arrests per 100,000 population

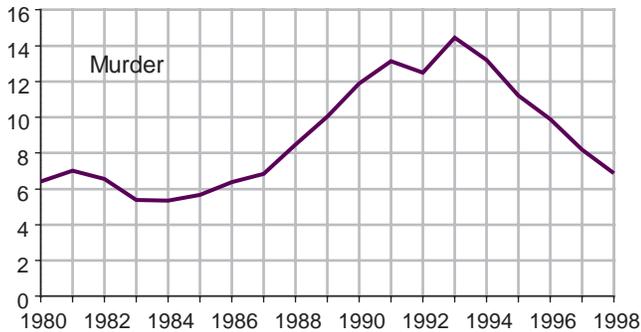


- ◆ The only age groups with substantially higher Property Crime Index arrest rates in 1998 than in 1980 were persons between the ages of 30 and 45.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

Of all Violent Crime Index offenses, the juvenile arrest rate for murder showed both the greatest increase and the greatest decline between 1980 and 1998

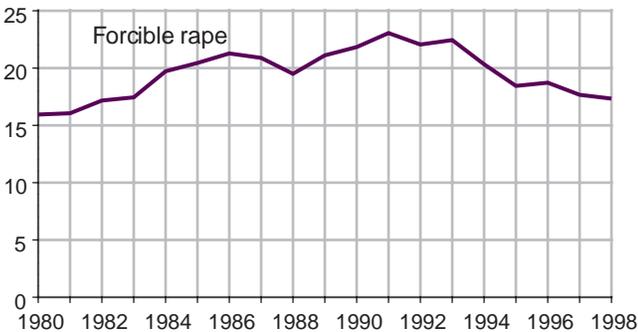
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Murder

- ◆ In 1988, the juvenile arrest rate for murder rose above the rates experienced in previous years.
- ◆ From the base year of 1987 to its peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled.
- ◆ The consistently sharp declines in the juvenile murder arrest rate from 1993 through 1998 have returned the rate to its 1987 level, negating all of the increases that stimulated so many changes in juvenile justice policy in the 1990's.

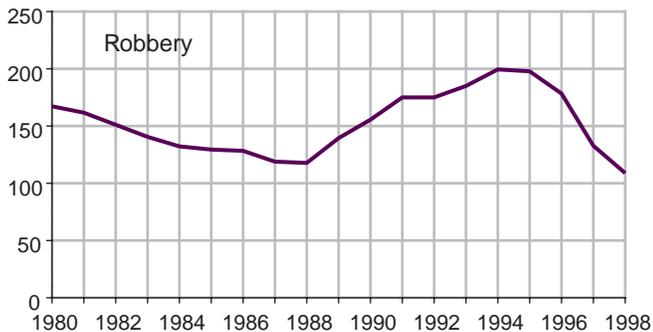
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Forcible Rape

- ◆ More than for any other Violent Crime Index offense, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape has been confined to a relatively limited range from the early 1980's through 1998.
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape in 1998 was at its lowest level since 1982 and 25% below the peak year of 1991.

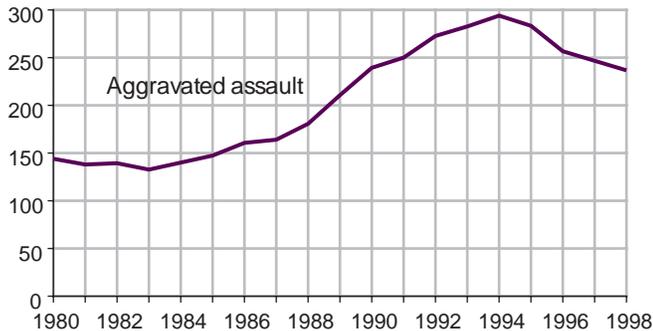
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Robbery

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for robbery declined by 30% between 1980 and 1988.
- ◆ With growth between the low year of 1988 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for robbery increased 70% by 1994, reaching a level nearly 20% above the 1980 rate.
- ◆ Following sharp declines in 1996, 1997, and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for robbery in 1998 was at its lowest level since at least 1980—45% below the peak year of 1994.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Aggravated Assault

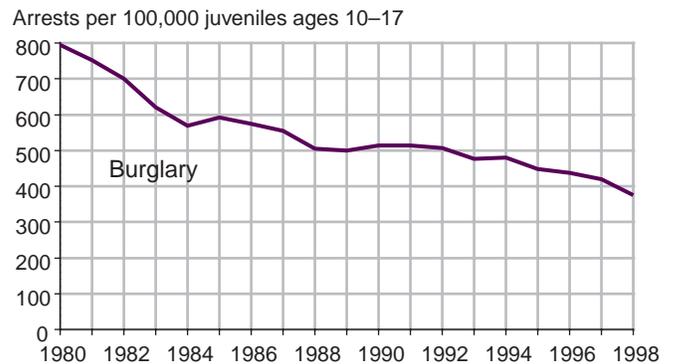
- ◆ Outpacing the large increases in robbery arrests, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault more than doubled between 1983 and 1994.
- ◆ Unlike the juvenile arrest rate for robbery, which fell to its lowest level in a generation in 1998, the decline in the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was more moderate—only 20%.
- ◆ In 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was 78% above its 1983 low point.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

Offenses within the Property Crime Index span a wide range of severities and have had very different juvenile arrest trends

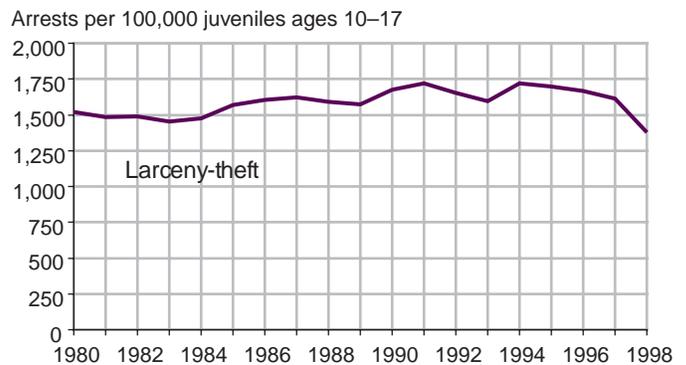
Burglary

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined consistently and substantially between 1980 and 1998.
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate in 1998 was half of that in 1980.
- ◆ The number of burglary arrests declined for both juveniles and adults between 1989 and 1998, with adult arrests down 33% and juvenile arrests down 22%.



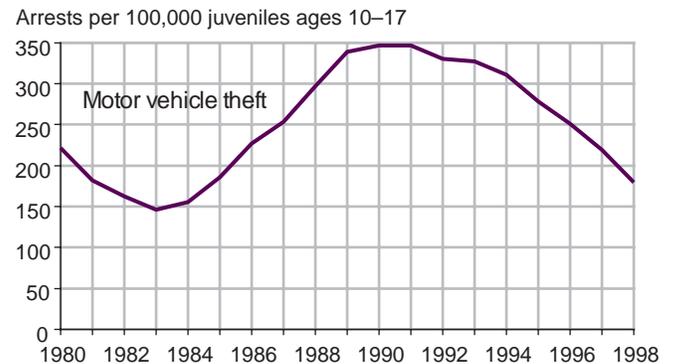
Larceny-Theft

- ◆ In comparison with the juvenile arrest rate for other Property Crime Index offenses, the rate for larceny-theft remained essentially constant between 1980 and 1998.
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft in 1998 was the lowest since at least 1980.
- ◆ Over the 10 years between 1989 and 1998, while juvenile arrests for larceny-theft declined 4%, adult arrests dropped 19%.



Motor Vehicle Theft

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft soared between 1983 and 1990, up nearly 140%.
- ◆ Between 1990 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft was cut almost in half, so that the rate in 1998 was at its lowest level since 1984.
- ◆ Between 1989 and 1998, the number of arrests for motor vehicle theft fell more for juveniles (39%) than for adults (25%).



Arson

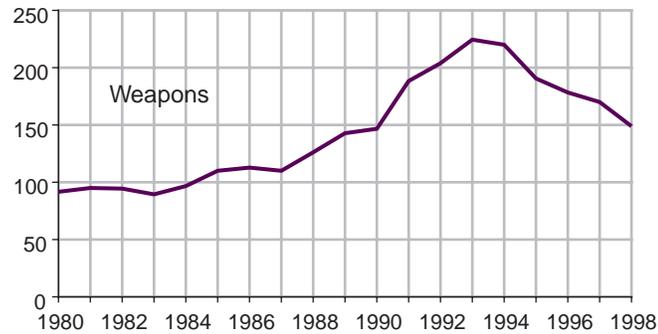
- ◆ Compared with juvenile arrest rates for the other three Property Crime Index offenses, the rate for arson is relatively small. In fact, to place the magnitude of juvenile arson arrests in perspective, for every 1 juvenile arrested for murder in 1998, 4 were arrested for arson, 25 were arrested for motor vehicle theft, and 200 were arrested for larceny-theft.
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for arson in 1990 was greater than in any year in the 1980's. The rate grew until it reached a peak in 1994. Between 1994 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for arson declined 23%, returning to the 1990 level.



Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

Trends in juvenile arrest rates for weapons law violations and for murder were similar between 1980 and 1998

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17

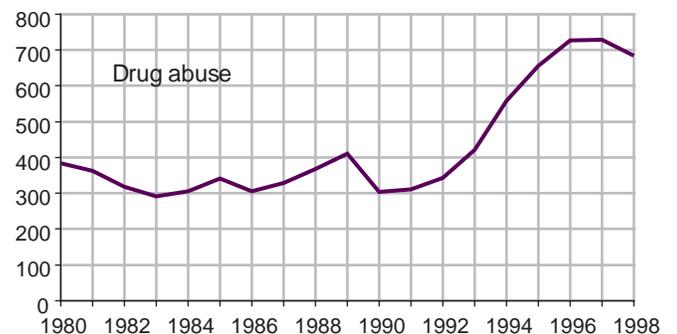


- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations more than doubled between 1987 and 1993, as did the juvenile arrest rate for murder.
- ◆ Between 1993 and 1998, the juvenile arrest rates for both murder and weapons law violations declined substantially, with the juvenile murder arrest rate falling by half and the weapon arrest rate dropping by one-third.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

The juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations in 1998 was twice the average rate of the 1980's

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- ◆ After staying relatively constant for over a decade, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations broke out of the range in 1994, leveling off in 1996, 1997, and 1998.
- ◆ The increase in the number of drug abuse violation arrests between 1989 and 1998 was far greater for juveniles (86%) than for adults (14%) and greater for female juveniles (113%) than for male juveniles (82%).

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased consistently and substantially from the early 1980's to the late 1990's

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17

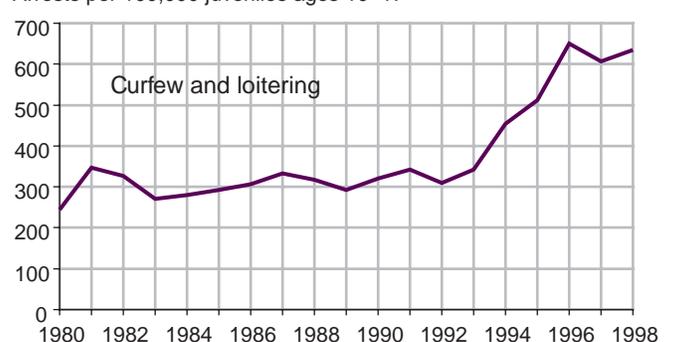


- ◆ Like juvenile arrest rate trends for aggravated assault, the simple assault rates increased consistently between 1980 and 1994.
- ◆ Unlike aggravated assault, however, the simple assault arrest rate continued to increase between 1994 and 1998.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

After years of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations nearly doubled between 1993 and 1996

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- ◆ The peak level for the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations reached in 1996 was maintained in 1997 and 1998.
- ◆ Of all juveniles arrested for curfew and loitering violations in 1998, 71% were white, 30% were female, and 27% were under age 15.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note on page 12 for detail.]

State variations in juvenile arrest rates may reflect differences in juvenile law-violating behavior, police behavior, and/or community standards

| State | 1998 Arrest Rate ^a | | | | | State | 1998 Arrest Rate ^a | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| | Reporting Coverage | Violent Crime Index | Property Crime Index | Drug Abuse | Alcohol Violation ^b | | Reporting Coverage | Violent Crime Index | Property Crime Index | Drug Abuse | Alcohol Violation ^b |
| Total U.S. | 74% ^c | 394 | 2,130 | 699 | 636 | Missouri | 52% | 416 | 2,667 | 766 | 417 |
| Alabama | 94 | 191 | 1,050 | 294 | 269 | Montana | 37 | 121 | 1,647 | 157 | 1,891 |
| Alaska | 87 | 363 | 2,862 | 665 | 790 | Nebraska | 89 | 160 | 2,943 | 634 | 1,641 |
| Arizona | 87 | 393 | 2,841 | 1,093 | 1,385 | Nevada | 40 | 431 | 3,297 | 1,289 | 1,189 |
| Arkansas | 89 | 277 | 1,898 | 445 | 498 | New Hampshire | 32 | 154 | 1,961 | 804 | 1,939 |
| California | 100 | 529 | 1,906 | 680 | 380 | New Jersey | 95 | 483 | 1,647 | 1,084 | 517 |
| Colorado | 96 | 284 | 2,850 | 758 | 1,330 | New Mexico | 57 | 372 | 2,369 | 740 | 1,162 |
| Connecticut | 86 | 468 | 2,123 | 1,036 | 292 | New York | 38 | 369 | 1,833 | 703 | 262 |
| Delaware | 90 | 641 | 2,169 | 483 | 556 | North Carolina | 94 | 375 | 1,828 | 544 | 318 |
| District of Columbia | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | North Dakota | 78 | 72 | 2,246 | 309 | 2,598 |
| Florida | 100 | 680 | 4,095 | 930 | 157 | Ohio | 51 | 285 | 1,783 | 441 | 681 |
| Georgia | 36 | 307 | 1,635 | 750 | 362 | Oklahoma | 100 | 278 | 2,228 | 489 | 662 |
| Hawaii | 100 | 258 | 2,369 | 587 | 282 | Oregon | 88 | 240 | 2,940 | 571 | 1,529 |
| Idaho | 99 | 245 | 3,095 | 596 | 1,625 | Pennsylvania | 83 | 448 | 1,535 | 530 | 889 |
| Illinois | 23 | 910 | 2,461 | 3,292 | 193 | Rhode Island | 95 | 272 | 1,873 | 662 | 277 |
| Indiana | 61 | 423 | 2,053 | 553 | 868 | South Carolina | 99 | 387 | 1,842 | 762 | 364 |
| Iowa | 87 | 241 | 2,028 | 385 | 1,320 | South Dakota | 65 | 162 | 2,658 | 541 | 3,483 |
| Kansas | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | Tennessee | 51 | 242 | 1,814 | 500 | 431 |
| Kentucky | 19 | 566 | 2,543 | 843 | 630 | Texas | 99 | 261 | 1,872 | 628 | 598 |
| Louisiana | 85 | 473 | 2,318 | 697 | 234 | Utah | 76 | 275 | 2,943 | 656 | 1,438 |
| Maine | 95 | 118 | 2,882 | 472 | 705 | Vermont | 67 | 41 | 774 | 143 | 908 |
| Maryland | 97 | 555 | 2,338 | 1,313 | 377 | Virginia | 77 | 223 | 1,960 | 486 | 563 |
| Massachusetts | 79 | 526 | 863 | 433 | 371 | Washington | 69 | 368 | 3,542 | 521 | 1,072 |
| Michigan | 88 | 225 | 1,091 | 342 | 589 | West Virginia | 100 | 71 | 1,054 | 224 | 436 |
| Minnesota | 91 | 308 | 2,660 | 783 | 2,168 | Wisconsin | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Mississippi | 39 | 197 | 2,023 | 589 | 429 | Wyoming | 96 | 116 | 2,570 | 880 | 3,569 |

^a Throughout this Bulletin, juvenile arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of arrests of persons ages 10–17 by the number of persons ages 10–17 in the population. In this table only, arrest rate is defined as the number of arrests of persons under age 18 for every 100,000 persons ages 10–17. Juvenile arrests (arrests of youth under age 18) reported at the State level in *Crime in the United States* cannot be disaggregated into more detailed age categories so that the arrest of persons under age 10 can be excluded in the rate calculation. Therefore, there is a slight inconsistency in this table between the age range for the arrests (birth through age 17) and the age range for the population (ages 10–17) that are the basis of a State's juvenile arrest rates. This inconsistency is slight because just 2% of all juvenile arrests involved youth under age 10. This inconsistency is preferable to the distortion of arrest rates that would be introduced were the population base for the arrest rate to incorporate the large volume of children under age 10 in a State's population.

^b Alcohol violations include liquor law violations, drunkenness, and driving under the influence.

^c The reporting coverage for the total U.S. in this table (74%) includes all States reporting arrests of persons under age 18. This is greater than the coverage in the rest of the Bulletin (69%) because Florida was able to provide arrest counts of persons under age 18 but was not able to provide the age detail required to support most other presentations in *Crime in the United States 1998*.

NA = *Crime in the United States 1998* reported no arrest counts for this State.

Interpretation cautions: Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in reporting jurisdictions. While juvenile arrest rates in part reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the size of these rates. For example, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have higher arrest rates than jurisdictions where resident youth behave in an identical manner. Therefore, jurisdictions that are vacation destinations or regional centers for economic activity may have arrest rates that reflect more than the behavior of their resident youth. Other factors that influence the magnitude of arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of its citizens toward crime, the policies of the jurisdiction's law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. **Consequently, comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across States, while informative, should be made with caution.** In most States, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for these States are necessarily based on partial information. If the reporting law enforcement agencies in these States are not representative of the entire State, then the rates will be biased. **Therefore, reported arrest rates for States with less than complete reporting coverage may not be accurate.**

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), tables 5 and 69, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census' *Population of the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex: July 1, 1998* [machine-readable data file released in June 1999].

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Notes

In this Bulletin “juvenile” refers to persons under age 18. This definition is at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in 1998 in 13 States—10 States where all 17-year-olds and 3 States where all 16- and 17-year-olds are defined as adults.

FBI arrest data in this Bulletin are counts of arrests detailed by age of arrestee and offense categories from all law enforcement agencies that reported complete data for the calendar year. The proportion of the U.S. population covered by these reporting agencies ranged from 68% to 86% between 1980 and 1998, with the 1998 coverage being 69%.

Estimates of the number of persons in each age group in the reporting agencies’ resident population assume that their population age profiles are like the Nation’s. Reporting agencies’ total populations were multiplied by the U.S. Bureau of the Census’ most current estimate of the proportion of the U.S. population for each age group.

Data source note

Analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and from *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999, respectively); population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993), and for 1990 through 1998 from *Population of the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex: July 1, 1998* [machine-readable data files released June 1999].

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Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

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