



Shay Bilchik, Administrator

December 1998

JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Juvenile Arrests 1997

Howard N. Snyder

In 1997, law enforcement agencies in the United States made an estimated 2.8 million arrests of persons under age 18.* According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), juveniles accounted for 19% of all arrests and 17% of all violent crime arrests in 1997. The substantial growth in juvenile violent crime arrests that began in the late 1980's peaked in 1994. In 1997, for the third year in a row, the total number of juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses—murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—declined. Even with these declines (3% in 1995, 6% in 1996, and 4% in 1997), the number of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests in 1997 was 49% above the 1988 level. In comparison, the number of adult arrests for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1997 was 19% greater than in 1988.

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 2,100 juveniles murdered in 1997, 56% were killed with a firearm.

- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 14% of all murder and aggravated assault arrests, 37% of burglary arrests, 30% of robbery arrests, and 24% of weapons arrests in 1997.
- ◆ Juvenile murder arrests increased substantially between 1988 and 1993. In the peak year of 1993, there were about 3,800 juvenile arrests for murder. Between 1993 and 1997, juvenile arrests for murder declined 39%, with the number of arrests in 1997 (2,500) 11% above the 1988 level.
- ◆ Between 1993 and 1997, juvenile arrests for burglary declined 9% and juvenile arrests for motor vehicle theft declined 30%.
- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 14% of all drug abuse violation arrests in 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations increased 82%.
- ◆ Juvenile arrests for curfew and loitering violations increased 87% between 1993 and 1997. In 1997, 28% of curfew arrests involved juveniles under age 15 and 31% involved females.
- ◆ In 1997, 58% of arrests for running away from home involved females and 41% involved juveniles under age 15.
- ◆ Arrests of juveniles accounted for 12% of all violent crimes cleared by arrest in 1997—specifically, 8% of murders, 11% of forcible rapes, 17% of robberies, and 12% of aggravated assaults.

From the Administrator

Public concern about juvenile violence is bearing fruit. Juvenile arrests for violent crime are far below their peaks in the early 1990's. The number of juvenile arrests for murder decreased 39% from 1993 to 1997. The number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes and the percentage of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrests also have declined—and these decreases are occurring 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. It is this type of response that will further reduce the levels of juvenile violence that endanger our communities and of other problem behaviors that prevent youth from achieving their potential.

Juvenile Arrests 1997 provides a summary and a preliminary analysis of national and State juvenile arrest data reported in the FBI's November 1998 report, *Crime in the United States 1997*. Everyone who is concerned about juvenile crime should consider the information this Bulletin offers and incorporate it into their understanding of juvenile delinquency. With sound information and solid commitment, we can all make a difference.

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, many arrests resulting 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 in 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 220,700 arrests of young people for drug abuse violations in 1997, it means that a drug abuse violation was the most serious charge in these 220,700 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 1997 included a drug charge as a lesser offense.

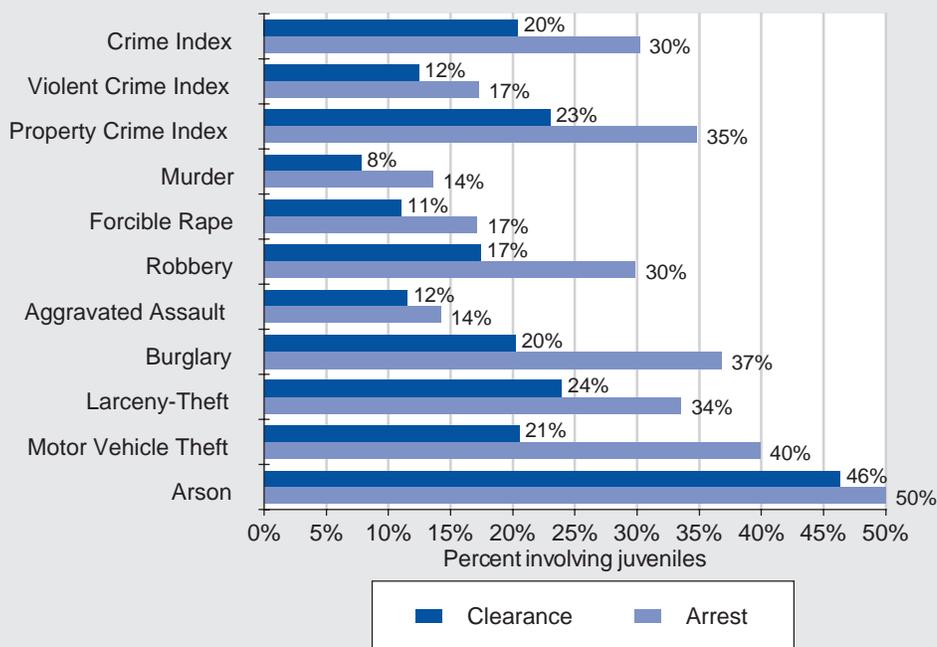
What do clearance statistics count?

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 30% of all robbery arrests but only 17% of all robberies that were cleared in 1997. 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 17% of all robberies in 1997. 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 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), tables 28 and 38.

In 1997, the U.S. murder rate was the lowest in 30 years

The primary focus of each *Crime in the United States* report is the estimated number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. While 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 1997, 7,726,000 larceny-thefts, 2,461,000 burglaries, 1,354,000 motor vehicle thefts, 1,022,000 aggravated assaults, 498,000 robberies, 96,000 forcible rapes, and 18,200 murders were reported to law enforcement agencies. One would have to go back to 1971 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).

With one exception, the traditional UCR program collects no information on the victims of these crimes. The exception is murder.

Eighty-eight percent of murder victims (16,100) were 18 years of age or older. Fewer adults were murdered in the United States in 1997 than in any year within the last 20 years.

In 1997, about 2,100 murder victims were below the age of 18. This level was 27% below that of the peak year of 1993, when 2,900 juveniles were murdered. However, this decline only returned the level to that of 1989. The number of juveniles murdered in the United States in 1997 was still over 300 more than in a typical year in the 1980's.

In 1997, 900 persons under age 13 were murdered. This figure has held relatively constant for the last 20 years. The last year in which fewer young juveniles were murdered was 1987.

In 1997, 68% of all murder victims were killed with a firearm. Adults were more likely to be killed with a firearm (70%) than were juveniles (56%). However, the involvement of a firearm depended greatly on the age of the juvenile victim. While 18% of murdered juveniles under age 13 were killed with a firearm in 1997, 84% of murdered juveniles age 13 or older were killed with a firearm. No other age group in 1997 had a higher proportion of firearm homicides.

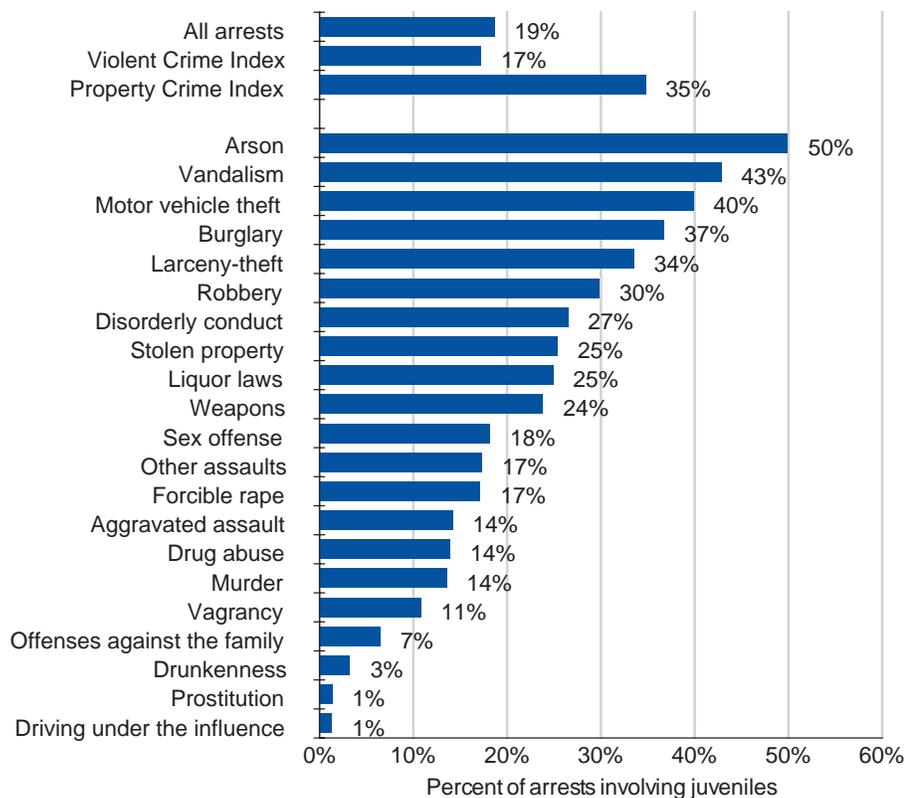
While the number of juvenile arrests in 1997—2.8 million—was only slightly below the 1996 level, juvenile arrests for murder dropped 16%

| Most Serious Offense | 1997 Estimated Number of Juvenile Arrests | Percent of Total Juvenile Arrests | | Percent Change | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| | | Female | Under Age 15 | 1988-97 | 1993-97 | 1996-97 |
| Total | 2,838,300 | 26% | 32% | 35% | 14% | -1% |
| Crime Index total | 824,900 | 26 | 38 | 6 | -4 | -6 |
| Violent Crime Index | 123,400 | 16 | 30 | 49 | -6 | -4 |
| Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter | 2,500 | 6 | 11 | 11 | -39 | -16 |
| Forcible rape | 5,500 | 2 | 38 | 6 | -16 | -2 |
| Robbery | 39,500 | 9 | 26 | 56 | -2 | -8 |
| Aggravated assault | 75,900 | 21 | 33 | 51 | -5 | -2 |
| Property Crime Index | 701,500 | 28 | 40 | 1 | -3 | -6 |
| Burglary | 131,000 | 10 | 38 | -15 | -9 | -6 |
| Larceny-theft | 493,900 | 34 | 42 | 9 | 4 | -4 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 66,600 | 16 | 26 | -17 | -30 | -14 |
| Arson | 10,000 | 11 | 67 | 22 | -2 | -4 |
| Nonindex | | | | | | |
| Other assaults | 241,800 | 29 | 41 | 84 | 17 | 0 |
| Forgery and counterfeiting | 8,500 | 39 | 12 | 2 | 3 | -2 |
| Fraud | 11,300 | 35 | 16 | 58 | 3 | -6 |
| Embezzlement | 1,400 | 45 | 5 | 6 | 74 | 0 |
| Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing) | 39,500 | 13 | 27 | -8 | -15 | -10 |
| Vandalism | 136,500 | 12 | 45 | 20 | -12 | -6 |
| Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.) | 52,200 | 9 | 31 | 44 | -23 | -4 |
| Prostitution and commercialized vice | 1,400 | 56 | 15 | -28 | 11 | -8 |
| Sex offense (except forcible rape and prostitution) | 18,500 | 9 | 51 | 11 | -13 | 4 |
| Drug abuse violations | 220,700 | 13 | 16 | 125 | 82 | 2 |
| Gambling | 2,600 | 3 | 13 | 166 | -7 | -6 |
| Offenses against the family and children | 10,200 | 37 | 35 | 150 | 73 | 8 |
| Driving under the influence | 19,600 | 17 | 2 | -21 | 35 | 4 |
| Liquor law violations | 158,500 | 30 | 11 | 1 | 33 | 1 |
| Drunkenness | 24,100 | 17 | 13 | -9 | 31 | -5 |
| Disorderly conduct | 215,100 | 26 | 34 | 86 | 31 | 0 |
| Vagrancy | 3,100 | 15 | 24 | -7 | 2 | 1 |
| All other offenses (except traffic) | 468,000 | 24 | 28 | 55 | 29 | 4 |
| Suspicion | 1,600 | 23 | 22 | -38 | -9 | -26 |
| Curfew and loitering | 182,700 | 31 | 28 | 190 | 87 | 3 |
| Runaways | 196,100 | 58 | 41 | 19 | -2 | -4 |

- ◆ Between 1993 and 1997, juvenile arrests for murder declined 39%; during the same period, juvenile arrests for a weapons law violation dropped 23%.
- ◆ In about 15% of all juvenile arrests in 1997, the most serious charge was a drug abuse violation, a liquor law violation, drunkenness, or driving under the influence.
- ◆ The proportion of juvenile arrests involving younger juveniles (under age 15) was highest for the offense of arson (67%), followed by sex offenses (51%), vandalism (45%), larceny-theft (42%), other (simple) assaults (41%), and runaways (41%).
- ◆ 12% of juveniles arrested for vandalism were female and 45% were age 14 or younger.

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), tables 29, 32, 34, 36, and 38. Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Juveniles were involved in about 1 in 5 arrests made by law enforcement agencies in 1997, 1 in 6 arrests for a violent crime, and 1 in 3 arrests for a property offense



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 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), table 38.

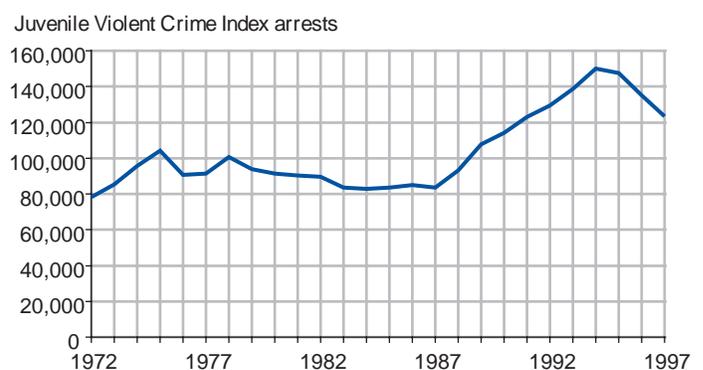
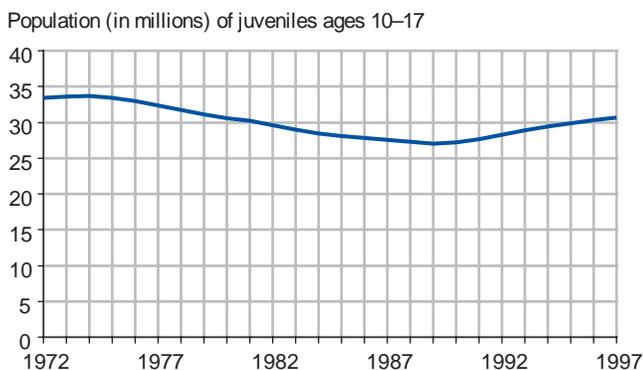
The juvenile share of the crime problem decreased in 1997

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-to-mid-1980's to 14% in 1994. Since 1994, the proportion of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrest has declined, reaching 12% in 1997.

The proportion of murders cleared by juvenile arrests in 1997 (8%) was at its lowest level since 1991, but still above the 5% level of the mid-1980's. The juvenile proportion of cleared forcible rapes peaked in 1995 (15%) and then fell, with the 1997 rate (12%) the lowest in the decade. The juvenile proportion of robbery clearances in 1997 (17%) was below its peak in 1995 (20%), but still far above the levels of the early 1980's (12%). Similarly, the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances in 1997 (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 1997 (23%) was equal to the average level between 1980 and 1996.

Over the last 25 years, changes in the number of juvenile arrests for violent crime have been unrelated to changes in the size of the juvenile population



◆ From 1987 to 1994, while the juvenile population increased 7%, juvenile arrests for violent crime increased 79%. Since 1994, juvenile arrests have dropped 18%, while the juvenile population has increased 4%.

Data source: Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice based on arrest data from the FBI; population data is from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

The Violent Crime Index monitors violence trends

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 are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Other crimes may be considered violent by their nature or effect (e.g., kidnaping, weapons possession, extortion, drug selling), but the four crimes that together form the Violent Crime Index have traditionally been used as the Nation's barometer of violent crime.

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate declined 23% from 1994 to 1997

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1988 was nearly identical to the rate in 1980; in fact, this rate had changed little since the early 1970's. However, between 1988 and 1994, the rate increased more than 60%. This steady increase after years of stability focused national attention on the juvenile violent crime problem.

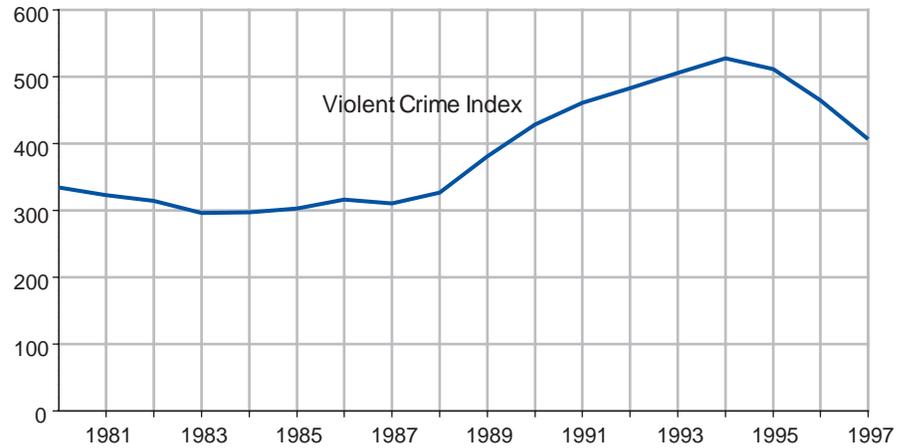
After peaking in 1994, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate began to decline. The declines in 1995, 1996, and again in 1997 resulted in a 1997 juvenile violent crime arrest rate 23% below the peak year of 1994, but still 25% above the 1988 level. Therefore, by 1997, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate decreased by half of the increase it experienced between 1988 and 1994.

Few juveniles are arrested for violent crime

The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate tells us that in 1997, there were 407 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 1997 for a Violent Crime Index offense were arrested only once that year—which is unlikely), then 1 in about every 250 persons ages 10 through 17 in the United States was arrested for a Violent Crime Index offense in 1997.

After more than a decade of consistency, the juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate increased from 1989 to 1994 and then fell, so that by 1997, it had nearly returned to the 1989 level

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17

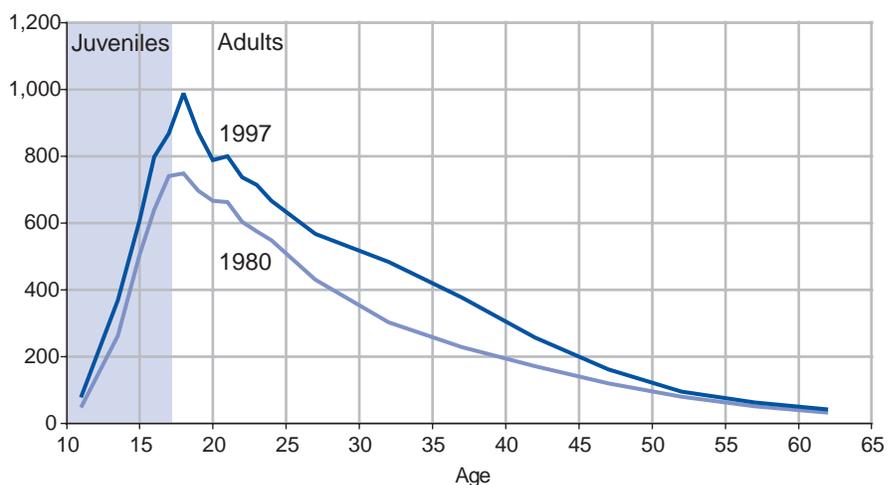


- ◆ Between 1994 and 1997, the juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate dropped 23%. Even with this decline, the 1997 rate was still about 30% greater than the average rate of the years between 1980 and 1988.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

Between 1980 and 1997, Violent Crime Index arrest rates increased substantially for all ages—more for adults than juveniles

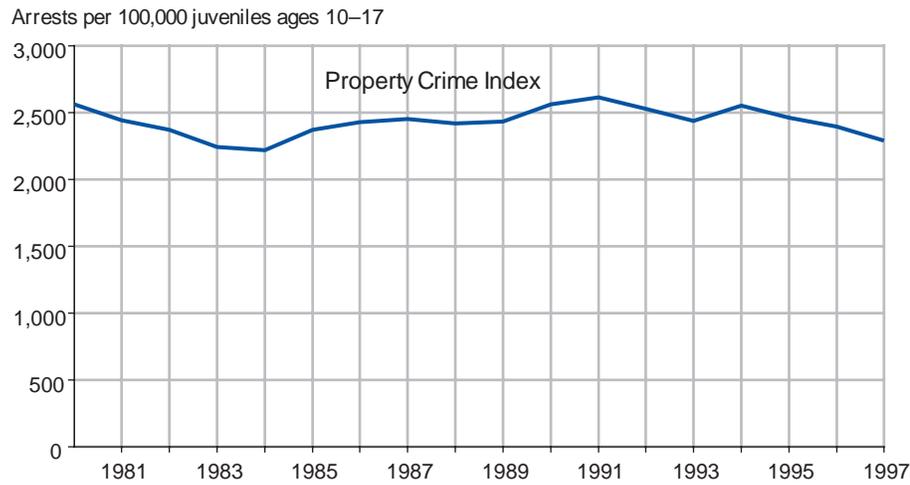
Violent Crime Index arrests per 100,000 population



- ◆ Over the last several years, public attention has focused on increases in juvenile violent crime arrests. However, with the recent declines in this rate, the increase in the arrest rate for juveniles between 1980 and 1997 (22%) is now less than the increases found in most other age groups: 18- to 24-year-olds (23%), 25- to 29-year-olds (32%), 30- to 34-year-olds (60%), 35- to 39-year-olds (66%), 40- to 44-year-olds (50%), and 45- to 49-year-olds (35%).

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 2 on page 12 for detail.]

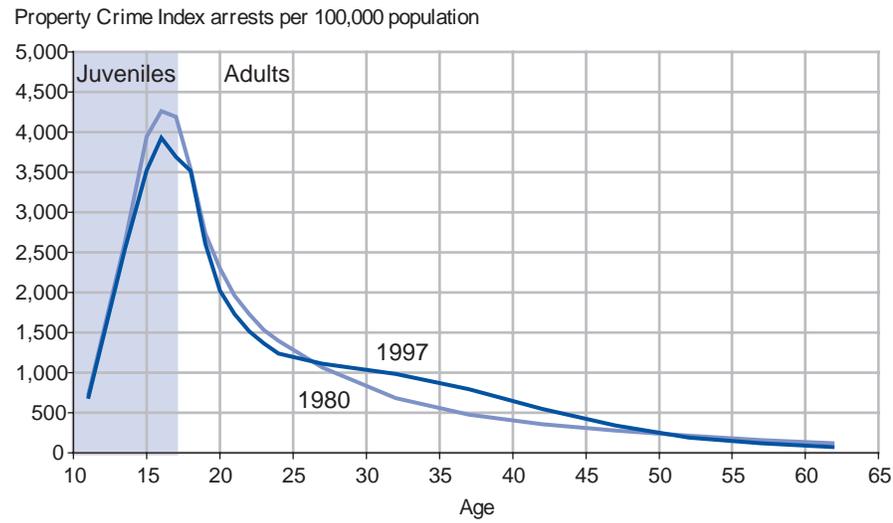
In stark contrast to violent crimes, the juvenile arrest rate for property crimes remained relatively constant between 1980 and 1997



◆ The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses in 1997 was lower than at any point in the previous 13 years.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

In contrast to violent crimes, the property crime arrest rate for juveniles and young adults in 1997 was actually at or below the corresponding rate in 1980



◆ Between 1980 and 1997, while property crime arrest rates for juveniles and persons in their early twenties declined about 10%, the rates increased substantially for persons ages 30-34 (44%), ages 35-39 (67%), ages 40-44 (52%), and ages 45-49 (21%).

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 2 on page 12 for detail.]

Juvenile arrests for property crimes remain stable

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 1988 through 1997, during which juvenile violent crime arrests rose precipitously, juvenile property crime arrest rates (as measured by the Property Crime Index) remained relatively constant. In fact, the 1997 rate of approximately 2,300 arrests for every 100,000 youth in the United States between 10 and 17 years of age is the lowest since 1984.

Most arrested juveniles are referred to court

In most States, some persons below the age of 18 are, due to their age, or by statutory exclusion of certain offenses from juvenile court jurisdiction, under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For those 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 1997, 25% of arrests involving youth that were eligible in their State for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within the law enforcement agency, and then the youth was released. The FBI reports that 67% 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 1997. In 1997, the proportion of juvenile arrests sent to juvenile courts was similar in cities and suburban areas (66%) and somewhat greater in rural counties (70%). The proportion of juvenile arrests sent directly to criminal court in 1997 (7%) was the highest in the last two decades.

In 1997, 26% of juvenile arrests were arrests of females

Law enforcement agencies made 748,000 arrests of females below the age of 18 in 1997. Between 1993 and 1997, arrests of juvenile females increased more (or decreased less) than male arrests in most offense categories.

| Most Serious Offense | Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests 1993-1997 | |
|-----------------------|--|------|
| | Female | Male |
| Violent Crime Index | 12% | -9% |
| Murder | -36 | -39 |
| Robbery | -3 | 7 |
| Aggravated assault | 15 | -10 |
| Property Crime Index | 10 | -8 |
| Burglary | -3 | -10 |
| Larceny-theft | 14 | -1 |
| Motor vehicle theft | -19 | -31 |
| Simple assault | 30 | 12 |
| Weapons | -8 | -24 |
| Drug abuse violations | 117 | 78 |
| Liquor laws | 41 | 30 |
| Disorderly conduct | 52 | 25 |
| Curfew and loitering | 102 | 81 |
| Runaways | 0 | -4 |

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1997*, table 35.

Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities

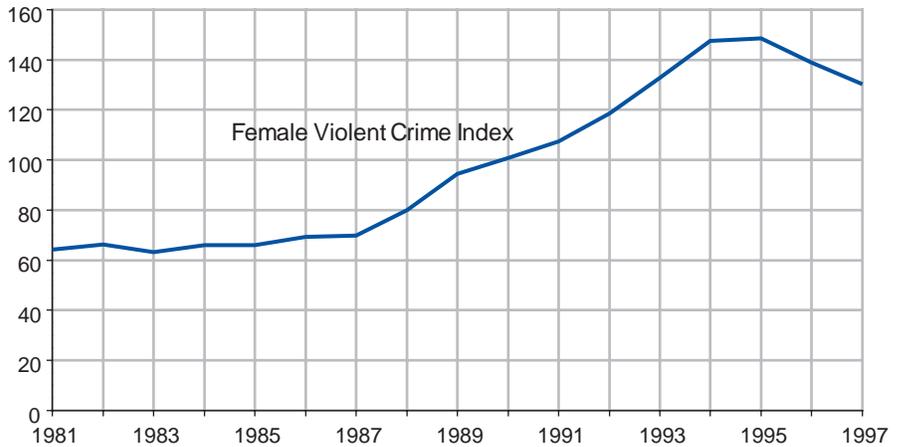
The racial composition of the juvenile population in 1997 was approximately 80% white, 15% black, and 5% other races, with juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity being classified as white. In 1997, in contrast to the proportions in the general population, 53% of juvenile arrests for violent crimes involved white youth and 44% involved black youth.

| Most Serious Offense | White Proportion of Juvenile Arrests in 1997 |
|-----------------------|--|
| Murder | 40% |
| Forcible rape | 56 |
| Robbery | 42 |
| Aggravated assault | 60 |
| Burglary | 73 |
| Larceny-theft | 70 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 59 |
| Weapons | 64 |
| Drug abuse violations | 64 |
| Curfew and loitering | 75 |
| Runaways | 77 |

Data source: *Crime in the United States 1997*, table 43.

The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate for females more than doubled between 1987 and 1995, then fell in each of the next 2 years

Arrests per 100,000 females ages 10-17

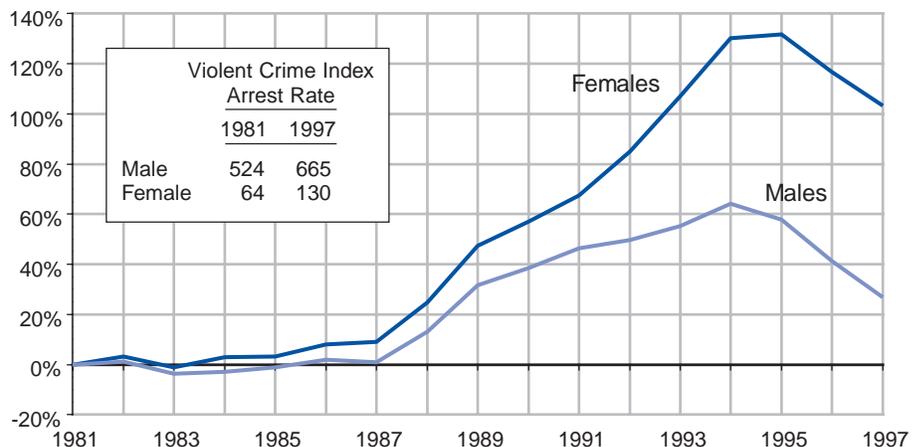


◆ In addition to overall violent crimes, female arrest rates in 1997 were substantially above their 1987 levels in many offense categories: robbery (52% increase), aggravated assault (101% increase), other assaults (142% increase), larceny-theft (22% increase), motor vehicle theft (36% increase), vandalism (42% increase), weapons law violations (100% increase), and drug abuse violations (131% increase).

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

The growth in juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rates between 1987 and 1994 was far greater for females than for males, while the decline in rates after 1994 was less for females than males

Percent change from 1981



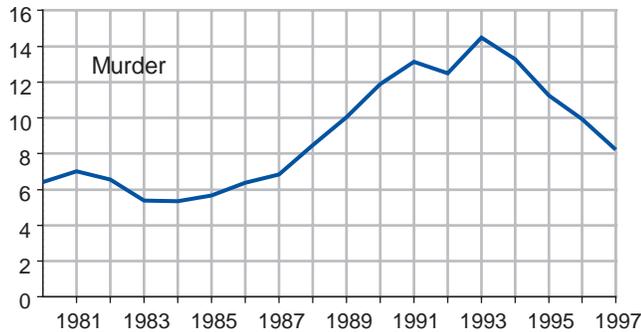
◆ Between 1981 and 1994, the female violent crime arrest rate increased twice as much as the male rate (130% vs. 64%). Even with the recent declines, the female violent crime arrest rate in 1997 was 103% above the 1981 rate, while the male arrest rate was 27% above its 1981 level.

◆ Even with the large increase in female rates, the 1997 Violent Crime Index arrest rate for juvenile males was five times the female arrest rate.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 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 in the period between 1988 and 1997

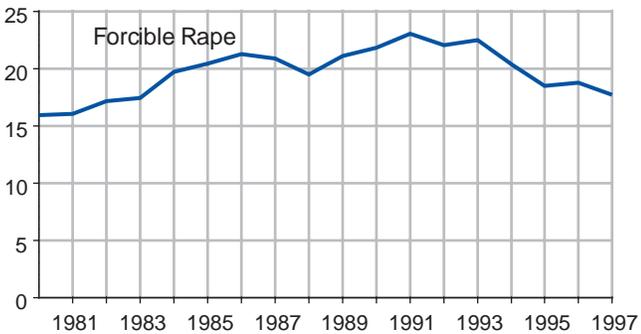
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Murder

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled between 1987 and 1993.
- ◆ The decline in the juvenile murder arrest rate between 1993 and 1997 has nearly erased all of the increase experienced in the previous 7 years. The drop of more than 40% in the juvenile murder arrest rate between 1993 and 1997 has brought the 1997 rate to a point 20% above the 1987 rate.

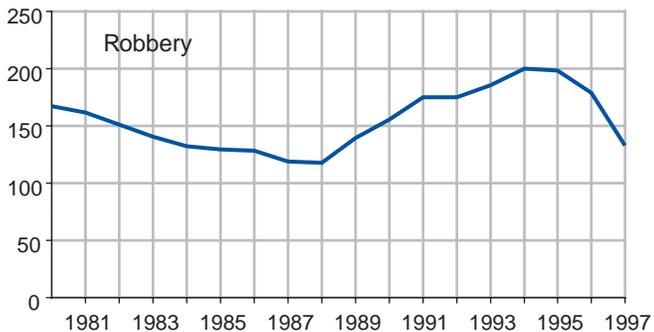
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Forcible Rape

- ◆ More than 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 1997.
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape in 1997 was lower than in any year since 1983 and 23% below the peak year of 1991.

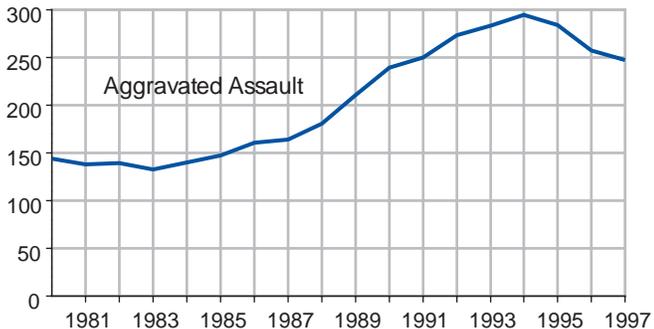
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Robbery

- ◆ Juvenile arrests for robbery declined 30% between 1980 and 1988.
- ◆ Between 1988 and 1994, the rate at which juveniles were arrested for robbery increased 70%, to a level 19% above the 1980 rate.
- ◆ Between 1995 and 1997, the juvenile robbery arrest rate fell substantially—down 33% in this short period. As a result, the 1997 rate was lower than at any point in the 1990's and just 13% above its lowest level of the last two decades.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



Aggravated Assault

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault increased steadily between 1983 and 1994—up more than 120%. Similar increases (135%) were found in juvenile arrests for other (i.e., simple) assaults over the same period.
- ◆ The arrest rate for aggravated assault declined 16% from 1994 through 1997, returning the rate to the 1991 level. In contrast, the juvenile arrest rate for other assaults continued to increase, up 9% between 1994 and 1997.

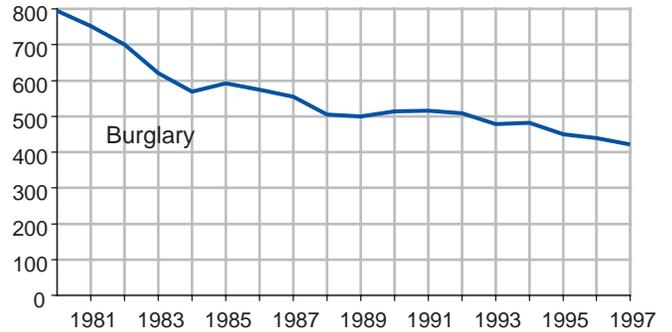
Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

The juvenile arrest trends in the four components of the Property Crime Index showed substantial differences over the last two decades

Burglary

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined consistently between 1980 and 1997, with the 1997 rate 47% below that of 1980.
- ◆ In the period from 1980 to 1997, the greatest decline occurred between 1980 and 1988.
- ◆ The number of burglaries reported to law enforcement in 1997 was lower than in any year since 1972.

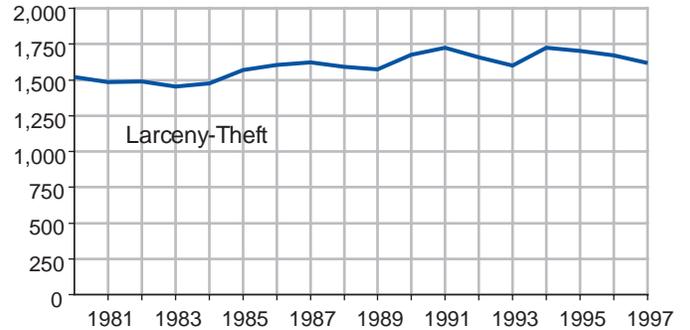
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



Larceny-Theft

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft remained essentially constant between 1980 and 1997, with the 1997 rate 7% above the 1980 rate.
- ◆ In 1997, larceny-theft arrests accounted for 70% of the FBI's Property Crime Index arrests. Consequently, larceny-theft arrest trends control trends in the Index.

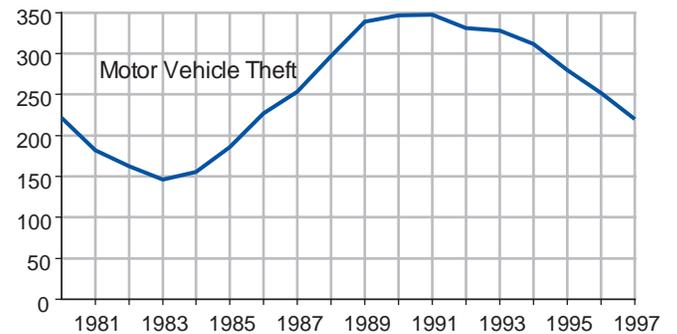
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



Motor Vehicle Theft

- ◆ Juvenile arrests for motor vehicle theft soared between 1983 and 1989, with the rate up more than 130% over this period.
- ◆ After holding constant in 1990 and 1991, the juvenile arrest rate began to decline. The 37% drop between 1991 and 1997 resulted in the 1997 rate returning to the 1986 level.
- ◆ Consistent with the decline in the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft, the number of motor vehicle thefts reported to law enforcement in 1997 was the lowest in 10 years.

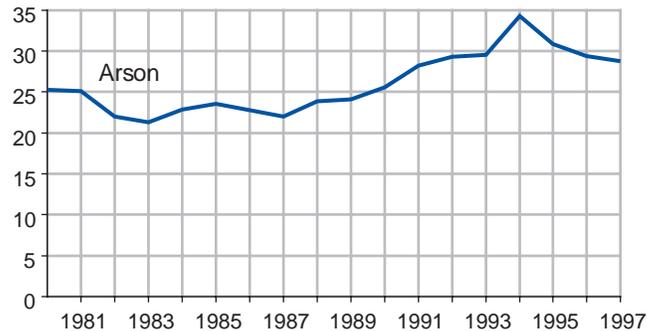
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



Arson

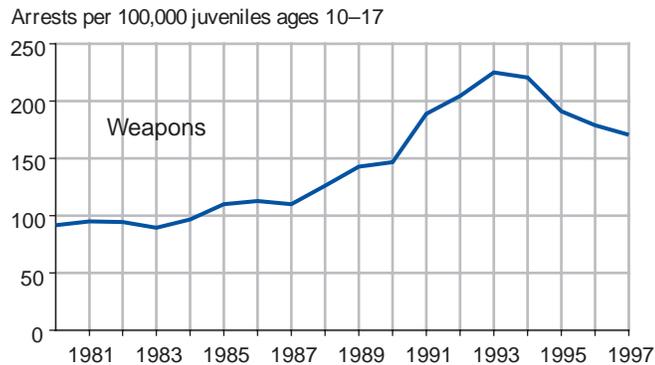
- ◆ Compared with other property crimes, the rate of juvenile arrests for arson is very small.
- ◆ During the 1980's, the rate of juvenile arrests for arson remained constant. The rate increased between 1990 and 1994 and then declined, with the 1997 rate near the 1991 rate.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

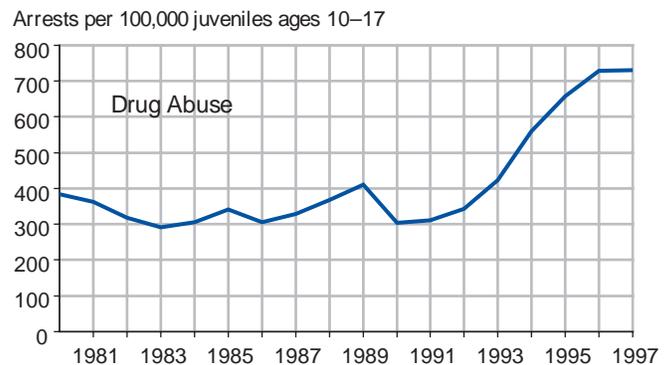
Juvenile arrest rates for weapons law violations followed a pattern similar to murder arrests, doubling between 1987 and 1993



- ◆ Arrest rate trends for murder and weapons law violations differed, however, between 1993 and 1997. While both declined, the drop was greater for murder arrest rates (43%) than for weapons law violation arrest rates (24%).

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

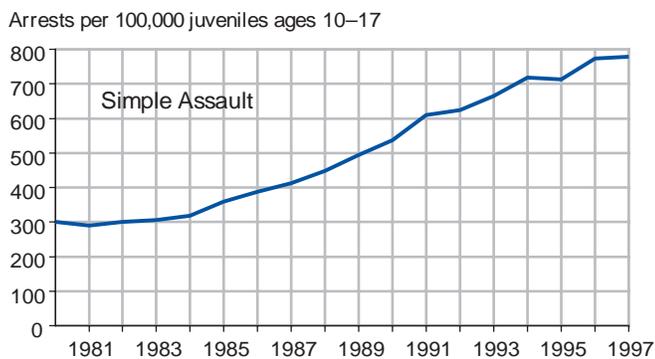
After more than a decade of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased more than 70% between 1993 and 1997



- ◆ Between 1993 and 1997, the increase in juvenile drug abuse arrest rates was greater for females (117%) than for males (78%).
- ◆ Of juveniles arrested for drug abuse violations, 64% were white, 16% were age 14 or younger, and 13% were female.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

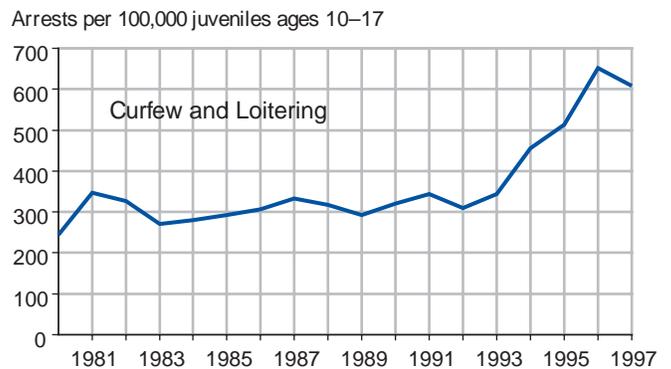
The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased consistently between the early 1980's and 1997



- ◆ 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 1997.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

After years of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations nearly doubled between 1993 and 1996, before falling in 1997



- ◆ Between 1993 and 1997, the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations was greater for females (103%) than for males (81%).
- ◆ Of juveniles arrested for curfew and loitering violations, 75% were white, 31% were female, and 28% were age 14 or younger.

Data source: Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. [See data source note 1 on page 12 for detail.]

Some States have relatively high juvenile drug abuse arrest rates and relatively low alcohol arrest rates, and for others the reverse is true

| State | Reporting Coverage | 1997 Arrest Rate* | | | | State | Reporting Coverage | 1997 Arrest Rate* | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|
| | | Violent Crime Index | Property Crime Index | Drug Abuse | Alcohol Violation† | | | Violent Crime Index | Property Crime Index | Drug Abuse | Alcohol Violation† |
| Total U.S. | 68% | 412 | 2,338 | 732 | 654 | Missouri | 60% | 406 | 2,813 | 748 | 400 |
| Alabama | 94 | 218 | 1,385 | 329 | 310 | Montana | 39 | 105 | 1,608 | 466 | 1,844 |
| Alaska | 44 | 456 | 2,771 | 529 | 1,452 | Nebraska | 94 | 132 | 3,084 | 589 | 1,378 |
| Arizona | 85 | 438 | 3,274 | 1,099 | 1,221 | Nevada | 46 | 418 | 3,415 | 1,091 | 975 |
| Arkansas | 89 | 288 | 2,039 | 412 | 442 | New Hampshire | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| California | 99 | 575 | 2,096 | 731 | 341 | New Jersey | 96 | 576 | 1,943 | 1,227 | 501 |
| Colorado | 70 | 258 | 2,838 | 728 | 1,056 | New Mexico | 68 | 301 | 2,970 | 856 | 1,332 |
| Connecticut | 85 | 505 | 2,492 | 1,139 | 267 | New York | 46 | 332 | 1,935 | 624 | 189 |
| Delaware | 41 | 953 | 4,730 | 871 | 972 | North Carolina | 99 | 430 | 1,875 | 578 | 306 |
| Dist. of Columbia | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | North Dakota | 90 | 64 | 2,803 | 256 | 2,227 |
| Florida | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | Ohio | 55 | 367 | 1,838 | 600 | 662 |
| Georgia | 33 | 517 | 2,390 | 942 | 354 | Oklahoma | 100 | 289 | 2,667 | 465 | 550 |
| Hawaii | 97 | 347 | 3,161 | 592 | 275 | Oregon | 87 | 269 | 3,491 | 637 | 1,563 |
| Idaho | 98 | 226 | 3,504 | 540 | 1,304 | Pennsylvania | 47 | 301 | 1,632 | 334 | 886 |
| Illinois | 23 | 1,015 | 2,964 | 3,259 | 318 | Rhode Island | 100 | 411 | 2,071 | 671 | 291 |
| Indiana | 57 | 491 | 2,283 | 491 | 833 | South Carolina | 99 | 432 | 2,094 | 747 | 377 |
| Iowa | 82 | 256 | 2,282 | 361 | 1,098 | South Dakota | 45 | 227 | 4,377 | 668 | 3,888 |
| Kansas | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA | Tennessee | 42 | 378 | 2,589 | 729 | 461 |
| Kentucky | 19 | 752 | 3,139 | 991 | 518 | Texas | 97 | 296 | 2,211 | 670 | 559 |
| Louisiana | 79 | 525 | 2,649 | 706 | 188 | Utah | 75 | 292 | 3,879 | 714 | 1,367 |
| Maine | 94 | 133 | 3,241 | 497 | 618 | Vermont | 0 | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Maryland | 100 | 739 | 2,792 | 1,674 | 362 | Virginia | 98 | 233 | 1,896 | 501 | 564 |
| Massachusetts | 83 | 542 | 963 | 521 | 411 | Washington | 61 | 416 | 4,259 | 656 | 1,171 |
| Michigan | 81 | 309 | 1,586 | 391 | 616 | West Virginia | 96 | 79 | 1,138 | 233 | 390 |
| Minnesota | 100 | 207 | 2,501 | 625 | 1,781 | Wisconsin | 76 | 404 | 4,429 | 791 | 2,147 |
| Mississippi | 37 | 283 | 2,445 | 676 | 457 | Wyoming | 98 | 131 | 2,675 | 621 | 2,691 |

* Throughout this Bulletin, juvenile arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of arrests of persons ages 10–17 by the number of 10- through 17-year-olds 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 rate. This inconsistency is slight because just 2% of all juvenile arrests involved youth under age 10. However, this inconsistency is preferred 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 in a State's birth to 9-year-old population.

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

NA = *Crime in the United States 1997* 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 a higher arrest rate than a jurisdiction whose 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 then 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 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 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: 1997* [machine-readable data file released in August 1998].

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Washington, DC 20531

Official Business

Penalty for Private Use \$300

PRESORTED STANDARD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
DOJ/OJJDP
PERMIT NO. G-91



Bulletin

NCJ 173938

Notes

In this Bulletin “juvenile” refers to persons below age 18. This definition is at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in 1997 in 13 States—10 States where all 17-year-olds and 3 States where all 16- and 17-year-olds are defined as adults.

These FBI arrest data are counts of arrests within 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 1997.

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 notes

1. Analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1972 through 1994 and from *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996, 1997, and 1998, respectively); population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1972 through 1979 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-917 (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1982), for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095 (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1993), and for 1990 through 1997 from *Population of the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex* [machine-readable data files released August 1998].

2. Analysis of arrest data from an unpublished FBI report for 1980 and from *Crime in the United States 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998); population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census for 1980 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1993), and for 1997 from *Population of the U.S. and States by Single Year of Age and Sex: 1997* [machine-readable data file released August 1998].

This Bulletin was prepared under cooperative agreement number 95-JN-FX-K008 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

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.

Acknowledgments

This Bulletin was written by Howard N. Snyder, Director of Systems Research at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, with funds provided by OJJDP to support the Juvenile Justice Statistics and Systems Development Program. Barbara Allen-Hagen is the OJJDP Program Manager for this work. The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the FBI’s Criminal Justice Information Services Division, specifically, Yoshio Akiyama, Ben Brewer, Tom Edwards, Victoria Major, James Nolan, and Maryvictoria Pyne.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.