



Jeff Slowikowski, Acting Administrator

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## JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

Office of Justice Programs

Innovation • Partnerships • Safer Neighborhoods

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# Juvenile Arrests 2008

**Charles Puzanchera**

In 2008, law enforcement agencies in the United States made an estimated 2.11 million arrests of persons younger than age 18.\* Overall, there were 3% fewer juvenile arrests in 2008 than in 2007, and juvenile violent crime arrests fell 2%, continuing a recent decline. Juvenile arrest rates, particularly Violent Crime Index rates, had increased in 2005 and again in 2006 amid fears that the Nation was on the brink of another juvenile crime wave. These latest data show increases in some offense categories but declines in most—with most changes being less than 10% in either direction.

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

- ◆ Juveniles accounted for 16% of all violent crime arrests and 26% of all property crime arrests in 2008.
- ◆ Juveniles were involved in 12% of all violent crimes cleared in 2008 and 18% of property crimes cleared.
- ◆ In 2008, 11% (1,740) of all murder victims were younger than age 18. More than one-third (38%) of all juvenile murder victims were younger than age 5, but this proportion varied widely across demographic groups.
- ◆ The juvenile murder arrest rate in 2008 was 3.8 arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 through 17. This was 17% more than the 2004 low of 3.3, but 74% less than the 1993 peak of 14.4.
- ◆ Between 1999 and 2008, juvenile arrests for aggravated assault decreased more for males than for females (22% vs. 17%). During this period, juvenile male arrests for simple assault declined 6% and female arrests increased 12%.
- ◆ In 2008, although black youth accounted for just 16% of the youth population ages 10–17, they were involved in 52% of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests and 33% of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests.
- ◆ The 2008 arrest rates for Violent Crime Index offenses were substantially lower than the rates in the 1994 peak year for every age group younger than 40.

\* Throughout this Bulletin, youth younger than age 18 are referred to as juveniles. See Notes on page 12.

### A Message From OJJDP

By summarizing juvenile crime data from the FBI report *Crime in the United States 2008*, this Bulletin can serve as a benchmark for juvenile justice professionals and other concerned citizens seeking to assess America's progress in reducing juvenile delinquency.

As detailed in these pages, the latest data reflect such progress, with a 3% decline in overall juvenile arrests from 2007 to 2008 and a 2% decrease in juvenile arrests for violent offenses over the same period.

Similar positive trends are evidenced across most offense categories for both male and female and white and minority youth, in effect reversing the modest increases in juvenile arrests reported for 2005 and 2006. Nevertheless, although such trends are encouraging, they should not provide a pretext for a misplaced sense of complacency.

One area that merits continued attention is the persistently disproportionate rate of minority contact with the juvenile justice system. The arrest rate for robbery in 2008, for example, was 10 times higher for black youth than for white.

It is OJJDP's hope that the information provided in this Bulletin will guide our efforts to address such disparities and to prevent and combat juvenile delinquency for the sake of our children and our Nation.

## What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this Bulletin properly, the reader needs a clear understanding of what these statistics count. Arrest statistics report the number of arrests that law enforcement agencies made in a given year—not the number of individuals arrested nor the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not the same as the number of people arrested because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once during the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent counts of crimes that arrested individuals commit because a series of crimes that one person commits may culminate in a single arrest, and 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. For this reason, one should not use arrest statistics to indicate the relative proportions of crime that juveniles and adults commit. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of flow into the justice system.

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 weapon would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore, when arrest statistics show that law enforcement agencies

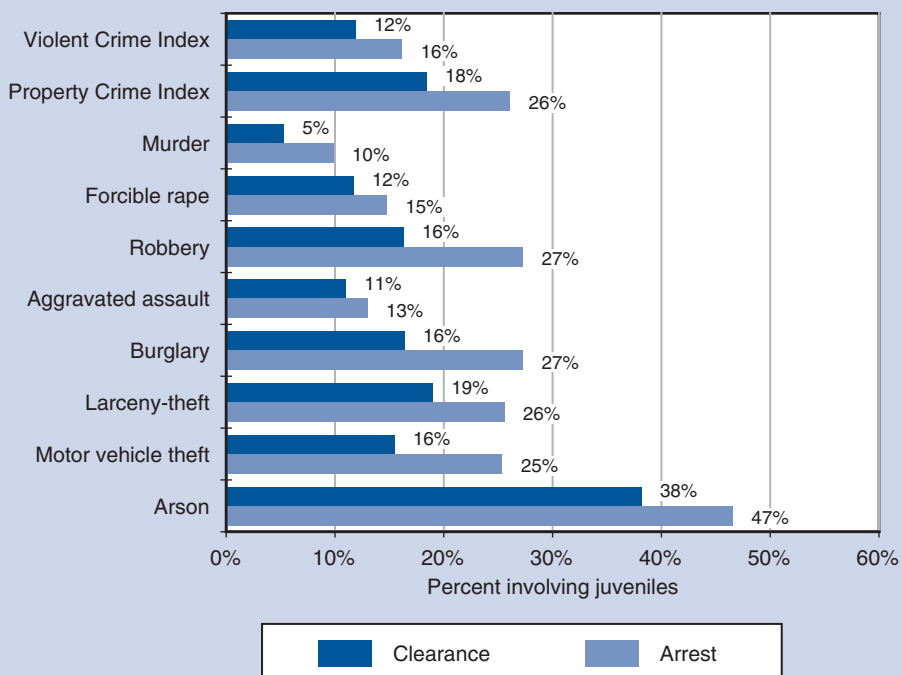
made an estimated 40,000 arrests of young people for weapons law violations in 2008, it means that a weapons law violation was the most serious charge in these 40,000 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 2008 included a weapons charge as a lesser offense.

## What do clearance statistics count?

Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were cleared (or “closed”) by either arrest or other, exceptional means (such as the death of the offender or unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, 1 arrest could clear 10 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 10 crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if a group of offenders committed the crime. For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports the proportion of clearances that involved only offenders younger than age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime that this age group commits than is the proportion of arrests, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the proportion of crimes committed by juveniles.

Research has shown that juvenile offenders are more easily apprehended than adult offenders; thus, the juvenile proportion of clearances probably overestimates juveniles’ responsibility for crime. To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI’s reporting guidelines require that clearances involving both juvenile and adult offenders be classified as clearances for crimes that adults commit. Because the juvenile clearance proportions include only those clearances in which no adults were involved, they underestimate juvenile involvement in crime. Although these data do not present a definitive picture of juvenile involvement in crime, they are the closest measure generally available of the proportion of crime known to law enforcement that is attributed to persons younger than age 18.

### The juvenile proportion of arrests exceeded the juvenile proportion of crimes cleared (or “closed”) by arrest in each offense category, reflecting that juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups and to be arrested



**Data source:** *Crime in the United States 2008* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009), tables 28 and 38.

## In 2008, about 1 in 10 (1,740) murder victims was a juvenile

Each *Crime in the United States* report presents estimates of the number of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. Although many crimes are never reported to law enforcement, murder is one crime that is nearly always reported.

An estimated 16,270 murders were reported to law enforcement agencies in 2008, or 5.4 murders for every 100,000 U.S. residents. The murder rate was essentially constant between 1999 (the year with the fewest murders in the last three decades) and 2008. Prior to 1999, the last year in which the U.S. murder rate was less than 6.0 was 1966.

Of all murder victims in 2008, 89% (or 14,530 victims) were 18 years old or older. The other 1,740 murder victims were younger than age 18 (i.e., juveniles). The number of juveniles murdered in 2008 was 4% more than the average number of juveniles murdered in the prior 5-year period and 39% less than the peak year of 1993, when an estimated 2,880 juveniles were murdered. During the same prior 5-year period, the estimated number of adult murder victims fell 33%.

Of all juveniles murdered in 2008, 38% were younger than age 5, 70% were male, and 50% were white. Of all juveniles murdered in 2008, 30% of male victims, 57% of female victims, 44% of white victims, and 30% of black victims were younger than age 5.

In 2008, 67% of all murder victims were killed with a firearm. Adults were more likely to be killed with a firearm (69%) than were juveniles (50%). However, the involvement of a firearm depended greatly on the age of the juvenile victim. In 2008, 17% of murdered juveniles younger than age 13 were killed with a firearm, compared with 80% of murdered juveniles age 13 or older. The most common method of murdering children younger than age 5 was by physical assault: in 47% of these murders, the offenders' only weapons were their hands and/or feet, compared with only 2% of juvenile victims age 13 or older and 4% of adult victims. In 2008, knives or other cutting instruments were used in 8% of juvenile murders and 14% of adult murders.

### The 2.11 million arrests of juveniles in 2008 was 16% fewer than the number of arrests in 1999

Most Serious Offense	2008 Estimated Number of Juvenile Arrests	Percent of Total Juvenile Arrests		Percent Change		
		Female	Younger Than 15	1999– 2008	2004– 2008	2007– 2008
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,111,200</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>-16%</b>	<b>-4%</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-2</b>
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	1,280	7	8	-9	19	-5
Forcible rape	3,340	2	34	-27	-21	-2
Robbery	35,350	9	20	25	46	2
Aggravated assault	56,000	24	31	-21	-9	-4
<b>Property Crime Index</b>	<b>439,600</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>5</b>
Burglary	84,100	12	29	-14	4	3
Larceny-theft	324,100	44	29	-17	0	8
Motor vehicle theft	24,900	16	20	-50	-33	-17
Arson	6,600	12	56	-24	-16	-8
<b>Nonindex</b>						
Other assaults	231,700	34	37	0	-5	-3
Forgery and counterfeiting	2,600	33	12	-64	-48	-15
Fraud	7,600	35	16	-18	0	3
Embezzlement	1,300	43	3	-31	19	-19
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	20,900	19	23	-23	-10	-6
Vandalism	107,300	13	40	-8	3	-4
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	40,000	10	31	-2	-4	-7
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,500	76	11	20	-14	-1
Sex offense (except forcible rape and prostitution)	14,500	10	47	-18	-22	-5
Drug abuse violations	180,100	15	15	-7	-5	-7
Gambling	1,700	2	14	-51	-12	-19
Offenses against the family and children	5,900	36	28	-38	-14	-2
Driving under the influence	16,000	24	2	-27	-19	-14
Liquor laws	131,800	38	9	-22	1	-7
Drunkenness	15,400	24	11	-24	-3	-8
Disorderly conduct	187,600	33	36	2	-7	-5
Vagrancy	4,000	29	29	-29	-3	6
All other offenses (except traffic)	363,000	26	23	-19	-3	-3
Suspicion (not included in totals)	300	22	24	-86	-74	-29
Curfew and loitering	133,100	31	26	-27	5	-7
Runaways	109,200	56	32	-33	-12	-5

- ◆ In 2008, there were an estimated 324,100 juvenile arrests for larceny-theft. Between 1999 and 2008, the number of such arrests fell by 17%.
- ◆ Of the four offenses that make up the Violent Crime Index, only juvenile arrests for robbery increased in 2007–2008 (up 2%).
- ◆ In 2008, females accounted for 17% of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests, 36% of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests, and 44% of juvenile larceny-theft arrests.
- ◆ Youth younger than age 15 accounted for more than one-fourth of all juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses and Property Crime Index offenses in 2008 (27% and 29%, respectively).

**Note:** Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

**Data source:** *Crime in the United States 2008* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009), tables 29, 32, 34, 36, 38, and 40. Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

## One in eight violent crimes was attributed to juveniles

The relative responsibility of juveniles and adults for crime is difficult to determine. Law enforcement agencies are more likely to clear (or “close”) crimes that juveniles commit than those that adults commit. Thus, law enforcement records may overestimate juvenile responsibility for crime.

Data on crimes cleared or closed by arrest or exceptional means show that the proportion of violent crimes cleared and attributed to juveniles has been rather constant in recent years, holding at 12% over the past 10 years. Specifically, the proportions of both forcible rapes and aggravated assaults attributed to juveniles fluctuated between 11% and 12% over this period, while the proportion of murders ranged between 5% and 6% and the proportion of robberies ranged between 14% and 16%.

In 2008, 18% of Property Crime Index offenses cleared by arrest or exceptional means were cleared by the arrest of a juvenile. This was the same as the level in 2007 and 1 percentage point less than the level in 2006; the level in 2007 and 2008 was the lowest since at least the mid-1960s. For comparison, the proportion of Property Crime Index offenses that law enforcement attributed to juveniles was 28% in 1980 and 22% in both 1990 and 2000.

## Juvenile arrests for violence declined between 2006 and 2008

The FBI assesses trends in violent crimes by monitoring four offenses that law enforcement agencies nationwide consistently report. These four crimes—murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—form the Violent Crime Index.

Following 10 years of declines between 1994 and 2004, juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses increased from 2004 to 2006, then declined in each of the next 2 years. Given that the number of arrests in 2004 was less than in any year since 1987, the number of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests in 2008 was still relatively low. In fact, the number of juvenile

violent crime arrests in 2008 was less than any year in the 1990s, and just 3% greater than the average annual number of such arrests between 2001 and 2007.

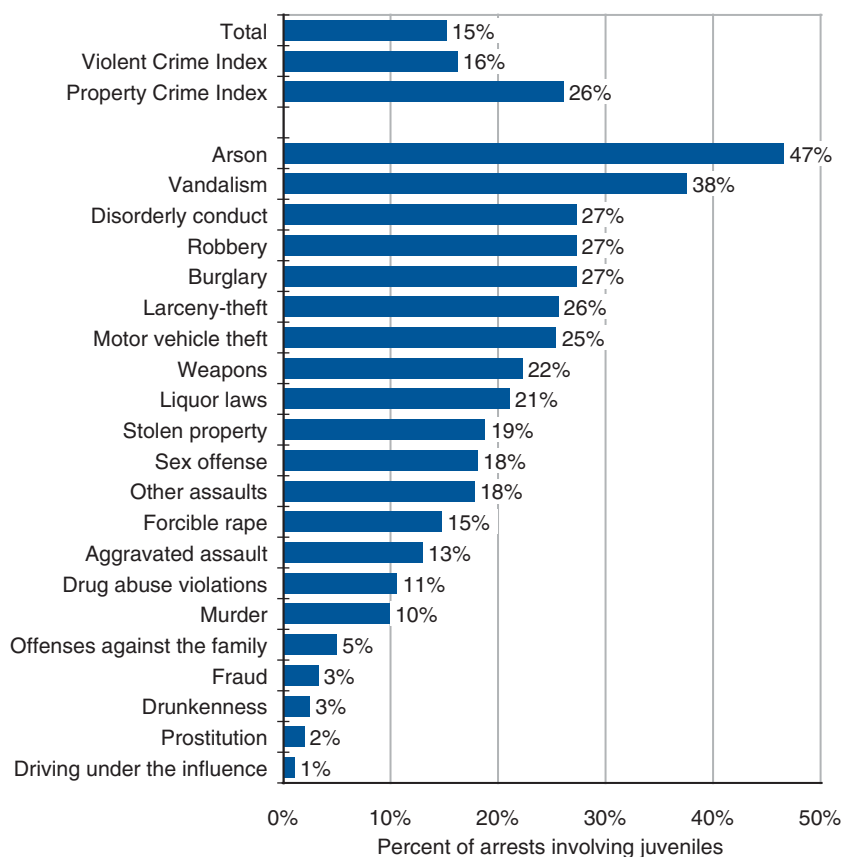
The number of juvenile arrests in 2008 for forcible rape was less than in any year since at least 1980, and the number of juvenile aggravated assault arrests in 2008 was less than in any year since 1988. In contrast, after also falling to a relatively low level in 2004, juvenile arrests for murder increased each year from 2005 to 2007, then declined 5% in 2008. However, juvenile arrests for robbery increased more than 46% since 2004.

Between 1999 and 2008, the number of arrests in most offense categories declined more for juveniles than for adults:

Most Serious Offense	Percent Change in Arrests 1999–2008	
	Juvenile	Adult
Violent Crime Index	-9%	-4%
Murder	-9	-5
Forcible rape	-27	-18
Robbery	25	19
Aggravated assault	-21	-8
Property Crime Index	-20	12
Burglary	-14	19
Larceny-theft	-17	13
Motor vehicle theft	-50	-13
Simple assault	0	4
Weapons law violations	-2	8
Drug abuse violations	-7	15

Data source: *Crime in the United States 2008*, table 32.

### In 2008, juveniles were involved in 1 in 10 arrests for murder and about 1 in 4 arrests for robbery, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft



Data source: *Crime in the United States 2008* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009), table 38.

## Juvenile property crime arrests increased in 2008—for the second consecutive year

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

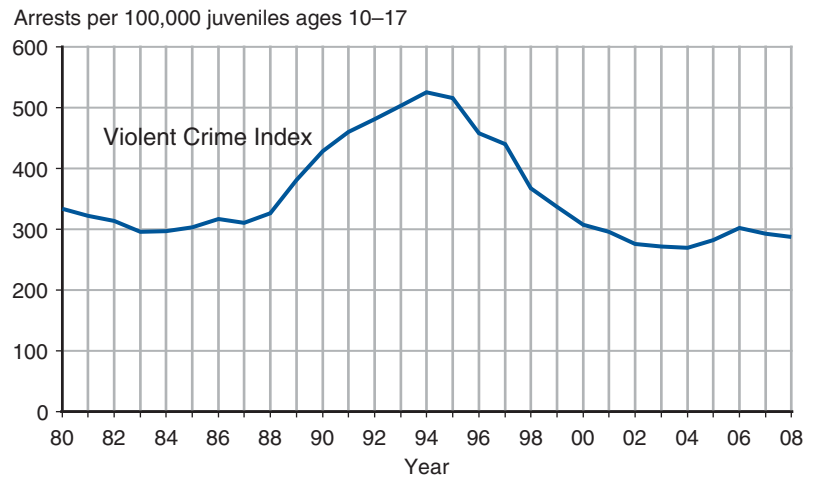
For the period 1980–1994, during which juvenile violent crime arrests increased substantially, juvenile property crime arrests remained relatively constant. After this long period of relative stability, juvenile property crime arrests began to fall. Between 1994 and 2006, the number of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests fell by half to their lowest level since at least the 1970s. However, the number of juvenile arrests for property crimes increased in each of the past 2 years—for the first time since 1993–1994. This increase was a result of growth in the number of juvenile arrests for larceny-theft, which rose 8% each year from 2006 to 2008. Juvenile arrests for motor vehicle theft and arson reached historic lows in 2008, while arrests for burglary rose 3% since 2007.

## Most arrested juveniles were referred to court

In most states, some persons younger than age 18 are, because of their age or by statutory exclusion, under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For arrested persons younger than 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 2008, 22% of arrests involving youth who were eligible in their State for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within law enforcement agencies and the youth were released, 66% were referred to juvenile court, and 10% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. In 2008, the proportion of juvenile arrests sent to juvenile court in cities with a population of more than 250,000 (66%) was similar to that in smaller cities (68%).

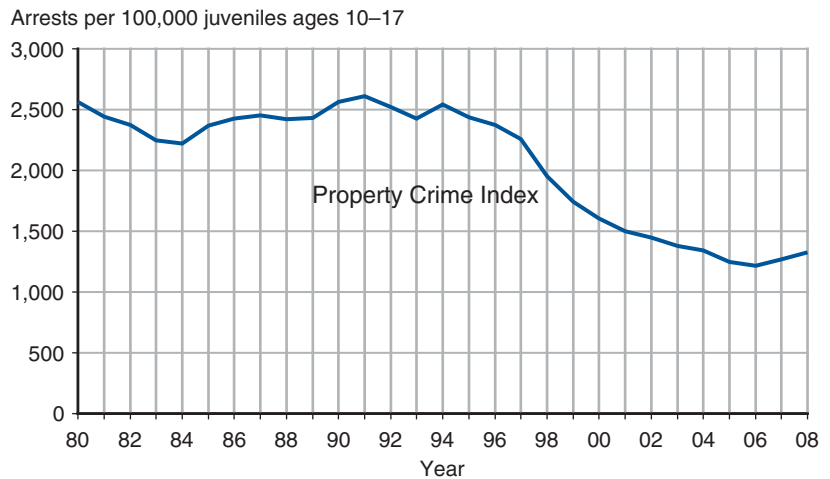
### The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate fell for the second consecutive year and is down 5% since 2006



- ◆ The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate reached a historic low in 2004, down 49% from its 1994 peak. This decade-long decline was followed by a 12% increase over the next 2 years, and then a 5% decline between 2006 and 2008.

**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

### After years of decline, the juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses increased 9% between 2006 and 2008

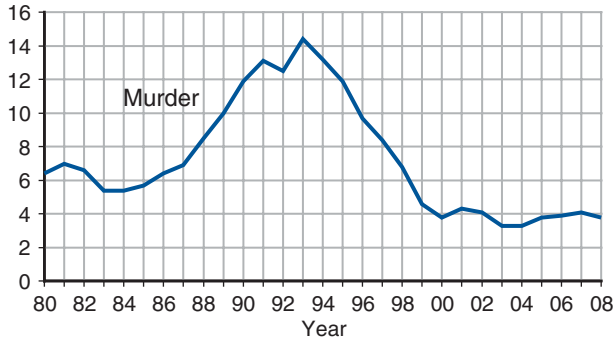


- ◆ Despite the recent increase, the 2008 juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate was 49% less than the 1991 peak. The large declines over the past decade in the two arrest indexes that have traditionally been used to monitor juvenile crime indicate a substantial reduction in the law-violating behavior of America's youth over this period.

**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

**In 2008, the juvenile arrest rates for murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault each remained well below their peak levels of the 1990s**

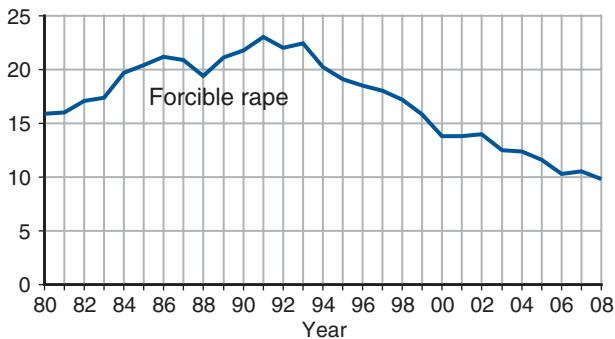
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



**Murder**

- ◆ From the mid-1980s to the peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled.
- ◆ Then, the juvenile arrest rate for murder declined through the mid-2000s, reaching a level in 2004 that was 77% less than the 1993 peak.
- ◆ The growth in the juvenile murder arrest rate that began in 2004 was interrupted in 2008 as the rate fell 6% over the past year, resting at a level that was 74% below its 1993 peak.

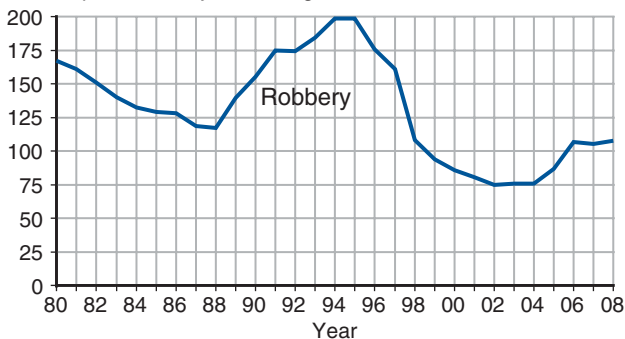
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



**Forcible Rape**

- ◆ Following the general pattern of other assaultive offenses, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape increased from the early 1980s through the early 1990s and then fell substantially.
- ◆ Over the 1980–2008 period, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape peaked in 1991, 44% more than its 1980 level.
- ◆ With few exceptions, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape dropped annually from 1991 through 2008. By 1999, it had returned to its 1980 level. By 2008, the rate had reached its lowest level since at least 1980 and 57% less than its 1991 peak.

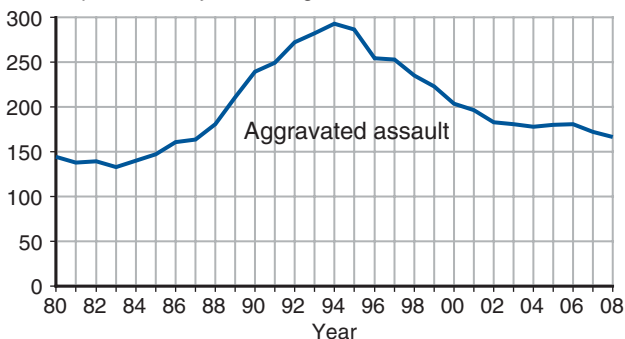
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



**Robbery**

- ◆ In contrast with the juvenile arrest rates for other violent crimes, the rate for robbery declined through much of the 1980s, reaching a low point in 1988. Then, like the violent crime arrest rate in general, by the mid-1990s the juvenile robbery arrest rate grew to a point greater than the 1980 level.
- ◆ The juvenile robbery arrest rate declined substantially (62%) between 1995 and 2002. Since 2002, however, the arrest rate rose again, so that by 2008 the rate was 44% greater than its low point in 2002 but still 46% less than its 1995 peak.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



**Aggravated Assault**

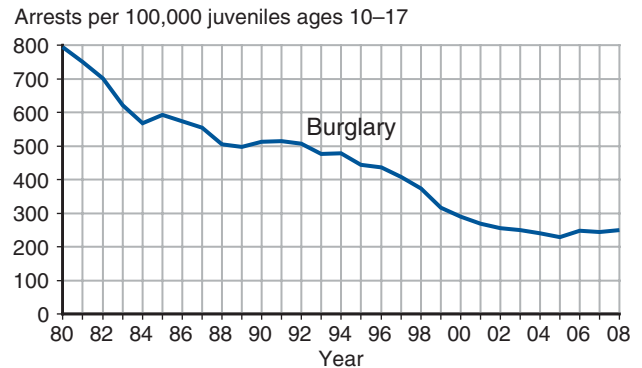
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault doubled between 1980 and 1994 and then fell substantially and consistently through 2004, down 39% from its 1994 peak.
- ◆ This pattern of decline was briefly interrupted, as the juvenile aggravated assault arrest rate increased 2% between 2004 and 2006. By 2008, however, the rate declined 8%, reaching its lowest point since the late 1980s.

**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

**The four offenses that make up the Property Crime Index show very different juvenile arrest rate patterns over the 1980–2008 period**

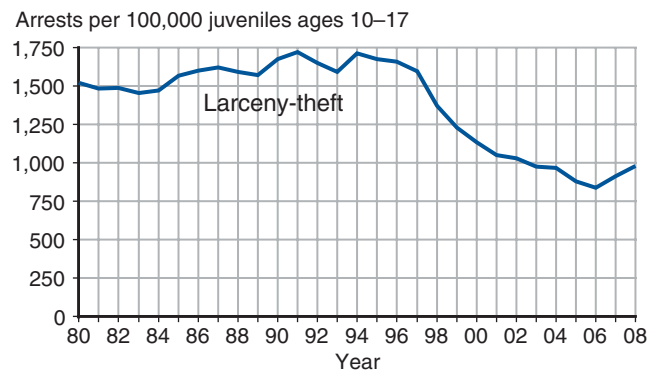
**Burglary**

- ◆ Unique in the set of Property Crime Index offenses, the juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined almost consistently and fell substantially between 1980 and 2008, down 68%.
- ◆ This large fall in juvenile burglary arrests from 1980 through 2008 was not replicated in the adult statistics. For example, between 1999 and 2008, the number of juvenile burglary arrests fell 14%, while adult burglary arrests increased 19%. In 1980, 45% of all burglary arrests were arrests of a juvenile; in 2008, reflecting the greater decline in juvenile arrests, just 27% of burglary arrests were juvenile arrests.



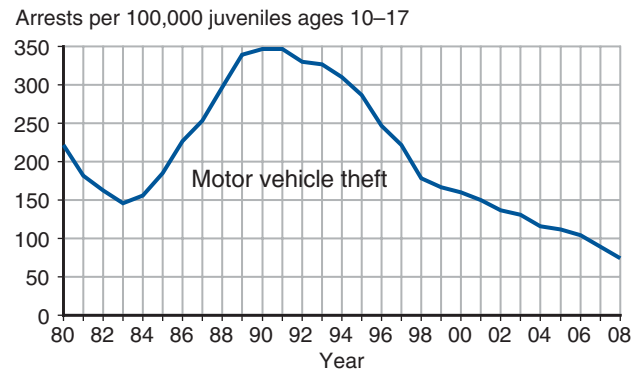
**Larceny-Theft**

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft remained essentially constant between 1980 and 1997, then fell 47% between 1997 and 2006, reaching its lowest point since 1980. This decline reversed in 2007, as the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft increased 17% in the past 2 years.
- ◆ In 2008, 74% of all juvenile arrests for Property Crime Index offenses were for larceny-theft. Thus, juvenile Property Crime Index arrest trends largely reflect the pattern of larceny-theft arrests (which itself is dominated by shoplifting—the most common larceny-theft offense).



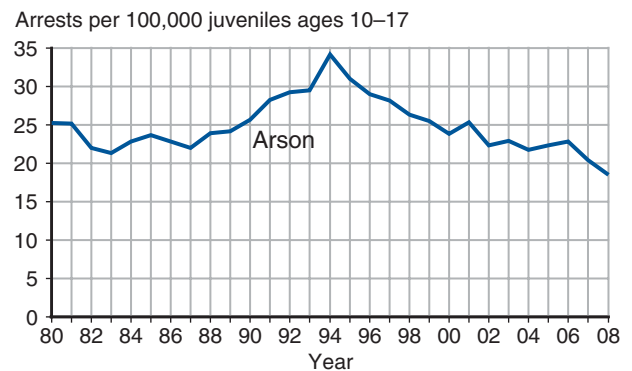
**Motor Vehicle Theft**

- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft more than doubled between 1983 and 1990, up 137%.
- ◆ After the peak years of 1990 and 1991, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft declined steadily through 2008, falling 78%. In 2008, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft was less than in any year in the 1980–2008 period.
- ◆ This large decline in juvenile arrests was not replicated in the adult statistics. Between 1999 and 2008, the number of juvenile motor vehicle theft arrests fell 50%, while adult motor vehicle theft arrests decreased just 13%.



**Arson**

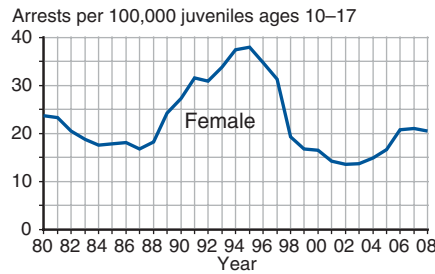
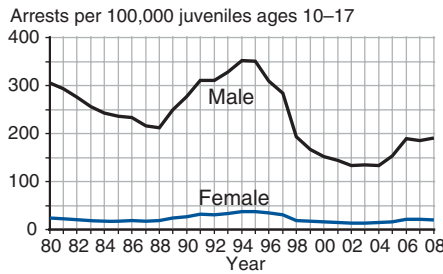
- ◆ After being relatively stable for most of the 1980s, the juvenile arrest rate for arson grew 33% between 1990 and 1994.
- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for arson declined substantially between 1994 and 2008, falling 46%.
- ◆ Following a 19% decline between 2006 and 2008, the juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2008 reached its lowest point since 1980.



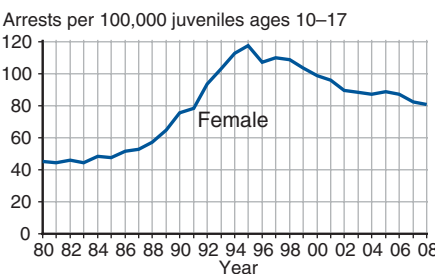
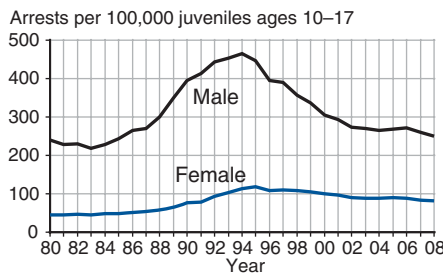
**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

**Although arrest trends by gender were similar for robbery, recent trends showed greater declines for males in other offenses**

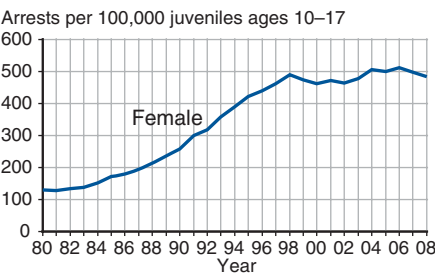
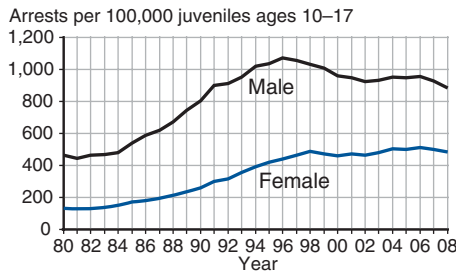
**Robbery**



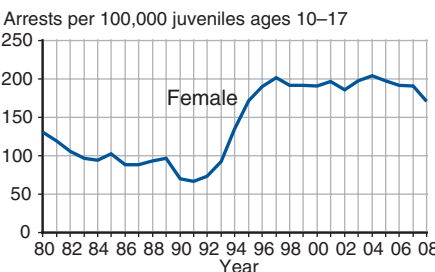
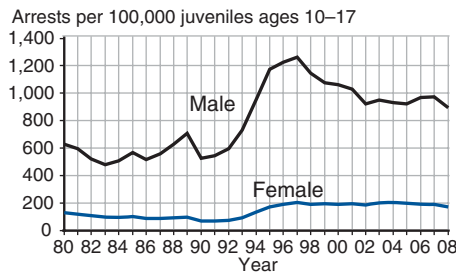
**Aggravated assault**



**Other (simple) assault**



**Drug abuse violations**



- ◆ Juvenile male and female robbery arrest rates both decreased through the late 1980s and climbed to a peak in the mid-1990s; by 2002, both had fallen to their lowest level since at least 1980. Following these declines, the rates for both groups increased through 2008 (43% for males and 51% for females).
- ◆ The juvenile female arrest rate for aggravated assault did not decline after its 1990s peak as much as did the male rate. As a result, in 2008, the juvenile male arrest rate was just 4% more than its 1980 level, while the female rate was 80% more than its 1980 rate. Similarly, while the male arrest rate for simple assault nearly doubled between 1980 and 2008, the female rate more than tripled.

**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

**In 2008, females accounted for 30% of juvenile arrests**

Law enforcement agencies made 629,800 arrests of females younger than age 18 in 2008. From 1999 through 2008, arrests of juvenile females decreased less than male arrests in most offense categories (e.g., aggravated assault and burglary); in some categories (e.g., simple assault, larceny-theft, and DUI), female arrests increased while male arrests decreased.

**Percent Change in Juvenile Arrests 1999–2008**

Most Serious Offense	Female	Male
Violent Crime Index	-10%	-8%
Robbery	38	24
Aggravated assault	-17	-22
Simple assault	12	-6
Property Crime Index	1	-28
Burglary	-3	-16
Larceny-theft	4	-29
Motor vehicle theft	-52	-50
Vandalism	3	-9
Weapons	-1	-3
Drug abuse violations	-2	-8
Liquor law violations	-6	-29
DUI	7	-34
Disorderly conduct	18	-5

**Data source:** *Crime in the United States 2008*, table 33.

Gender differences also occurred in the assault arrest trends for adults. Between 1999 and 2008, adult male arrests for aggravated assault fell 10%, while female arrests fell less than 1%. Similarly, adult male arrests for simple assault stayed the same between 1999 and 2008, while adult female arrests rose 17%. Therefore, the female proportion of arrests grew for both types of assault. It is likely that the disproportionate growth in female assault arrests over this period was related to factors that affected both juveniles and adults.

Gender differences in arrest trends also increased the proportion of arrests involving females in other offense categories for both juveniles and adults. Between 1999 and 2008, the number of larceny-theft arrests of juvenile females grew 4% while juvenile male arrests declined 29%, and adult female arrests grew more than adult male arrests (29% and 4%, respectively). For Property Crime Index offenses, juvenile arrests declined more for males than females between 1999 and 2008, and adult arrests increased less for males (5%) than for females (29%).



## Juvenile arrests disproportionately involved minorities

The racial composition of the U.S. juvenile population ages 10–17 in 2008 was 78% white, 16% black, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian. Most juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity were included in the white racial category. Of all juvenile arrests for violent crimes in 2008, 47% involved white youth, 52% involved black youth, 1% involved Asian youth, and 1% involved American Indian youth. For property crime arrests, the proportions were 65% white youth, 33% black youth, 2% Asian youth, and 1% American Indian youth. Black youth were overrepresented in juvenile arrests.

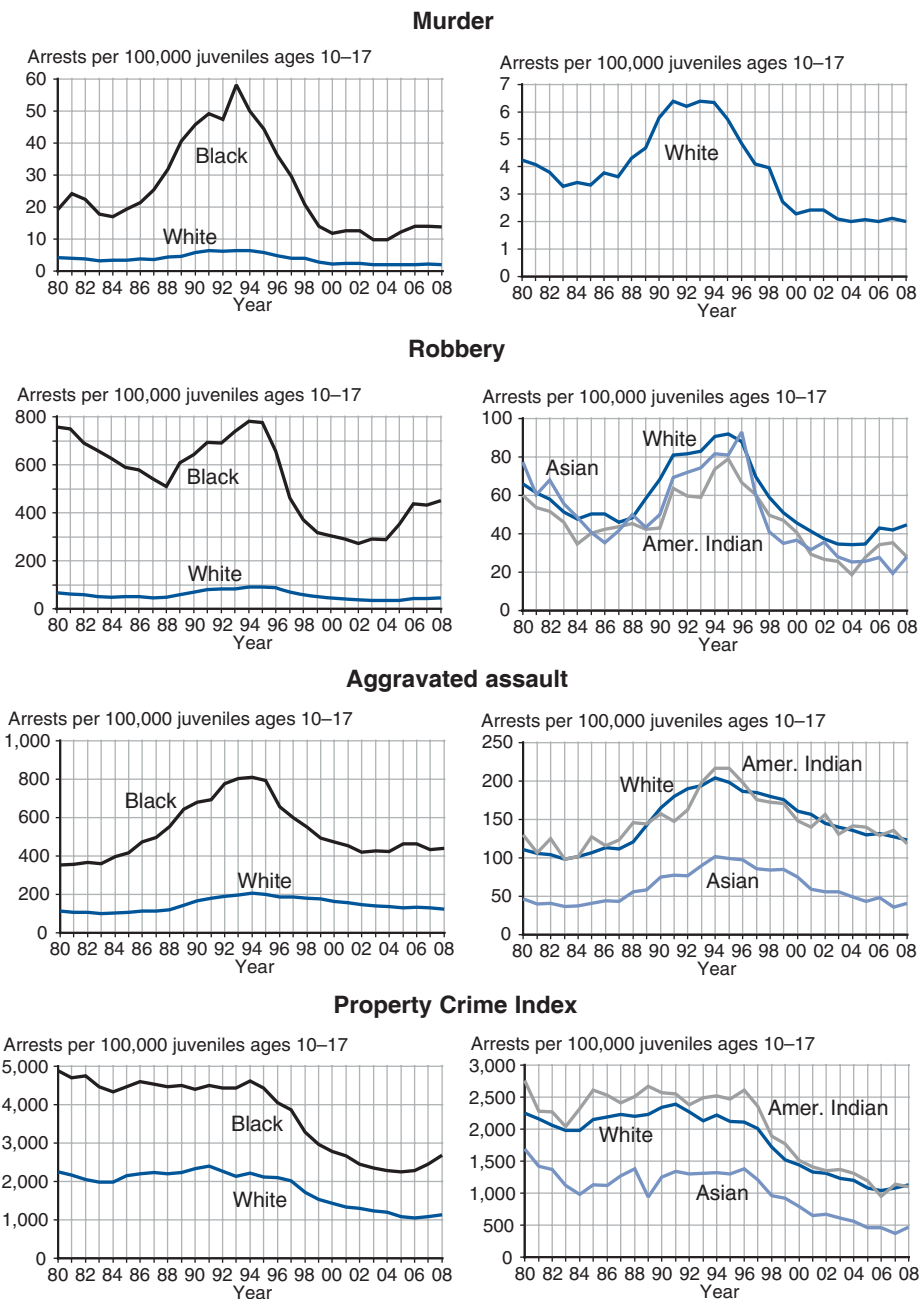
Most Serious Offense	Black Proportion of Juvenile Arrests in 2008
Murder	58%
Forcible rape	37
Robbery	67
Aggravated assault	42
Simple assault	39
Burglary	35
Larceny-theft	31
Motor vehicle theft	45
Weapons	38
Drug abuse violations	27
Vandalism	19
Liquor laws	6

**Data source:** *Crime in the United States 2008*, table 43.

The Violent Crime Index arrest rate (i.e., arrests per 100,000 juveniles in the racial group) in 2008 for black juveniles (926) was about 5 times the rate for white juveniles (178), 6 times the rate for American Indian juveniles (153), and 13 times the rate for Asian juveniles (71). For Property Crime Index arrests, the rate for black juveniles (2,689) was more than double the rates for white juveniles (1,131) and American Indian juveniles (1,104) and nearly 6 times the rate for Asian juveniles (471).

In the 1980s, the Violent Crime Index arrest rate for black juveniles was between 6 and 7 times the white rate. This ratio declined during the 1990s, holding at 4 to 1 from 1999 to 2004. Since 2004, the racial disparity in the rates increased, reaching 5 to 1. This increase resulted from an increase in the black rate (24%) and a decline in the white rate (3%). More specifically, the aggravated assault arrest rate increased 4% for black juveniles while the white rate declined 9%, and the robbery rate increased more for black (56%) than for white juveniles (30%).

### Arrest rate trends from 1980 through 2008 were similar across racial groups; the differences were in the volume of arrests

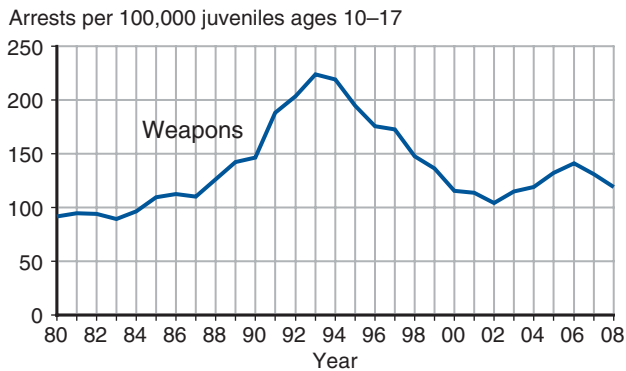


- ◆ The white juvenile murder rate in 2008 was near its lowest level since at least 1980, having fallen 69% since its 1993 peak. The black rate in 2008 was well below (76%) its 1993 peak, despite a 40% increase since 2004.
- ◆ After peaking in the mid-1990s, robbery and aggravated assault arrest rates fell substantially for all four racial groups.
- ◆ From 1994 through 2008, the Property Crime Index arrest rates dropped dramatically for juveniles in all racial groups—declining 42% or more.

**Note:** Murder rates for American Indian youth and Asian youth are not presented because the small number of arrests and small population sizes produce unstable rate trends.

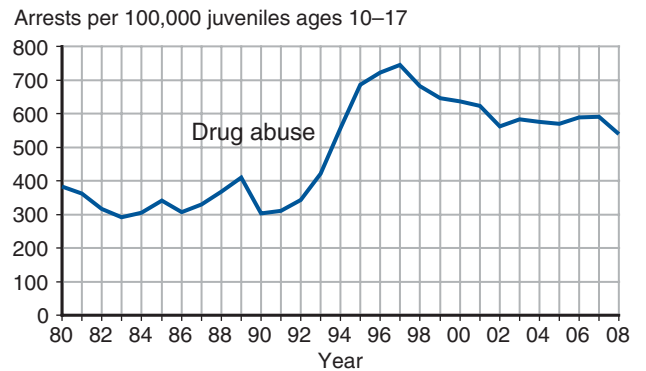
**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

**The decline in the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations between 2006 and 2008 broke the trend of increasing rates that began in 2003**



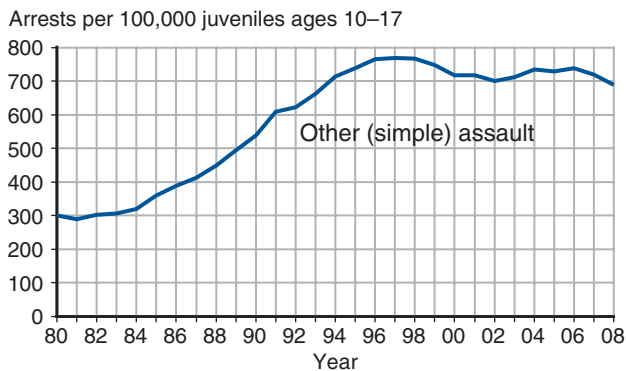
- ◆ Between 1980 and 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations increased more than 140%. Then the rate fell substantially, so that by 2002 the rate was just 14% more than the 1980 level.
- ◆ However, between 2002 and 2006, the juvenile weapons arrest rate grew 35%, then fell 16% through 2008. As a result, the rate in 2008 was 30% more than the 1980 level and 47% less than its 1993 peak. Between 2006 and 2008, the rate declined more for females (19%) than for males (15%), and more for whites (15%) than for blacks (11%).

**After a period of substantial growth during the 1990s, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations declined after 1997**



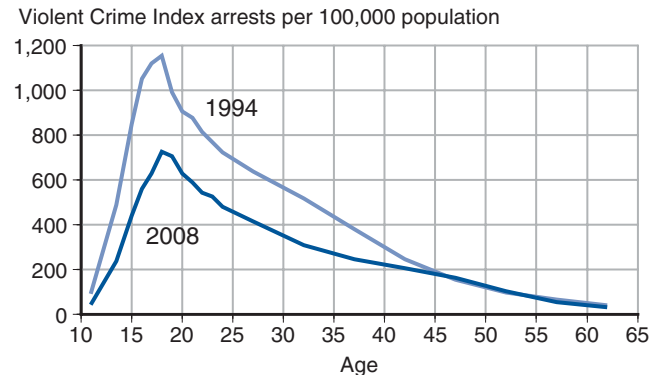
- ◆ Between 1990 and 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased 145%. The rate declined 28% between 1997 and 2008, but the 2008 rate was 78% more than the 1990 rate.
- ◆ Over the 1980-2008 period, the juvenile drug arrest rate for whites peaked in 1997 and then held relatively constant through 2008 (down 13%). In contrast, the rate for blacks peaked in 1995, then fell 49% by 2002. Despite a recent increase—23% between 2002 and 2007—the rate fell 13% in 2008 and was 45% less than the 1995 peak.

**The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault declined slightly for the second consecutive year—down 7% since 2006**



- ◆ The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 156% between 1980 and 1997, declined slightly through 2002, then rose slightly through 2006. Following the decline over the past 2 years, the 2008 rate was 10% below the 1997 peak.
- ◆ Unlike the trend for simple assault, the juvenile aggravated assault arrest rate declined steadily since the mid-1990s, falling 43% between 1994 and 2008.
- ◆ The 2008 juvenile arrest rate for simple assault was substantially greater than the 1980 rate for most racial groups.

**Between the 1994 peak and 2008, arrest rates for Violent Crime Index offenses fell substantially for every age group younger than 40**



- ◆ Juveniles showed the largest decline in Violent Crime Index arrest rates between 1994 and 2008—falling 40% or more in each age group from 10 through 17.
- ◆ Between 1994 and 2008, the Violent Crime Index arrest rates for 18-year-olds fell 37% and the rates for persons age 19-39 fell more than 30% for each age group.
- ◆ Over the 1994-2008 period, the Violent Crime Index arrest rates for persons age 45-64 changed little.

**Data source:** Analysis of arrest data from the FBI and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics. [See data source note on p. 12 for detail.]

**State variations in juvenile arrest rates may reflect differences in juvenile law-violating behavior, police behavior, and/or community standards; therefore, comparisons should be made with caution**

State	2008 Juvenile Arrest Rate*					State	2008 Juvenile Arrest Rate*				
	Reporting Coverage	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Drug Abuse	Weapons		Reporting Coverage	Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index	Drug Abuse	Weapons
United States	82%†	306	1,398	560	121	Missouri	94%	274	1,928	566	121
Alabama	81	176	924	242	47	Montana	96	112	1,831	305	21
Alaska	97	272	1,655	340	42	Nebraska	92	139	2,013	657	112
Arizona	99	228	1,558	762	76	Nevada	98	337	1,724	618	159
Arkansas	84	180	1,460	365	62	New Hampshire	78	84	771	580	12
California	99	414	1,153	523	196	New Jersey	96	332	925	642	158
Colorado	88	199	1,853	763	123	New Mexico	73	278	1,537	580	133
Connecticut	92	337	1,163	456	90	New York	47	260	1,141	536	60
Delaware	100	630	1,778	774	169	North Carolina	72	305	1,615	458	197
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	91	117	2,107	477	70
Florida	100	471	2,062	731	104	Ohio	60	160	1,088	360	79
Georgia	62	278	1,343	465	198	Oklahoma	100	202	1,335	479	83
Hawaii	89	264	1,405	375	22	Oregon	96	192	1,914	614	87
Idaho	94	136	1,764	468	101	Pennsylvania	97	426	1,106	486	119
Illinois	23	1,066	1,850	1,843	334	Rhode Island	100	186	1,097	397	129
Indiana	73	290	1,734	460	57	South Carolina	98	192	784	388	94
Iowa	92	252	1,792	396	52	South Dakota	78	79	1,640	590	83
Kansas	68	163	1,109	472	59	Tennessee	80	318	1,348	574	115
Kentucky	15	402	2,182	729	84	Texas	96	181	1,182	566	61
Louisiana	56	603	1,564	580	116	Utah	87	122	2,125	563	120
Maine	100	66	1,622	428	35	Vermont	82	91	569	274	29
Maryland	99	608	2,073	1,272	226	Virginia	97	142	865	351	72
Massachusetts	90	333	578	358	45	Washington	73	248	1,760	507	126
Michigan	87	225	1,067	337	85	West Virginia	61	72	577	204	25
Minnesota	97	208	1,884	511	145	Wisconsin	98	279	2,588	780	238
Mississippi	45	145	1,483	454	124	Wyoming	99	132	1,977	910	83

\* 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 younger than age 18 for every 100,000 persons ages 10–17. Juvenile arrests (arrests of youth younger than 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 younger than 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 1% of all juvenile arrests involved youth younger than 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 younger than age 10 in a State's population.

† The reporting coverage for the total United States in this table (82%) includes all States reporting arrests of persons younger than age 18. This is greater than the coverage in the rest of the Bulletin (76%) for various reasons. For example, a State may provide arrest counts of persons younger than age 18 but not provide the age detail required to support other presentations in *Crime in the United States 2008*.

NA = *Crime in the United States 2008* reported no arrest counts for the District of Columbia.

**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 2008* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009), tables 5 and 69, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Estimates of the July 1, 2000–July 1, 2008, United States Resident Population From the Vintage 2008 Postcensal Series by Year, County, Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data files available online at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm), released 9/2/2009].

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## Data source note

Analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1997, from *Crime in the United States* reports for 1998 through 2003 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999 through 2004, respectively) and from *Crime in the United States* reports for 2004 through 2008, which are available online at [www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#cuis](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#cuis), released September 2009; population data for 1980–1989 from the U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1980 to 1999* [machine-readable data files available online, released April 11, 2000]; population data for 1990–1999 from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute), *Bridged-race Intercensal Estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States Resident Population by County, Single-year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data files available online at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm), released July 26, 2004]; and population data for 2000–2008 from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Estimates of the July 1, 2000–July 1, 2008, United States Resident Population From the Vintage 2008 Postcensal Series by Year, County, Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data

files available online at [www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm), released September 2, 2009].

## Notes

In this Bulletin, “juvenile” refers to persons younger than age 18. This definition is at odds with the legal definition of juveniles in 2008 in 13 States—10 States where all 17-year-olds are defined as adults 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. (See *Crime in the United States* for offense definitions.) The proportion of the U.S. population covered by these reporting agencies ranged from 63% to 94% between 1980 and 2008, with 2008 coverage of 76%.

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

## Acknowledgments

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Additional juvenile arrest statistics are available online:  
[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/JAR.asp](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/crime/JAR.asp)