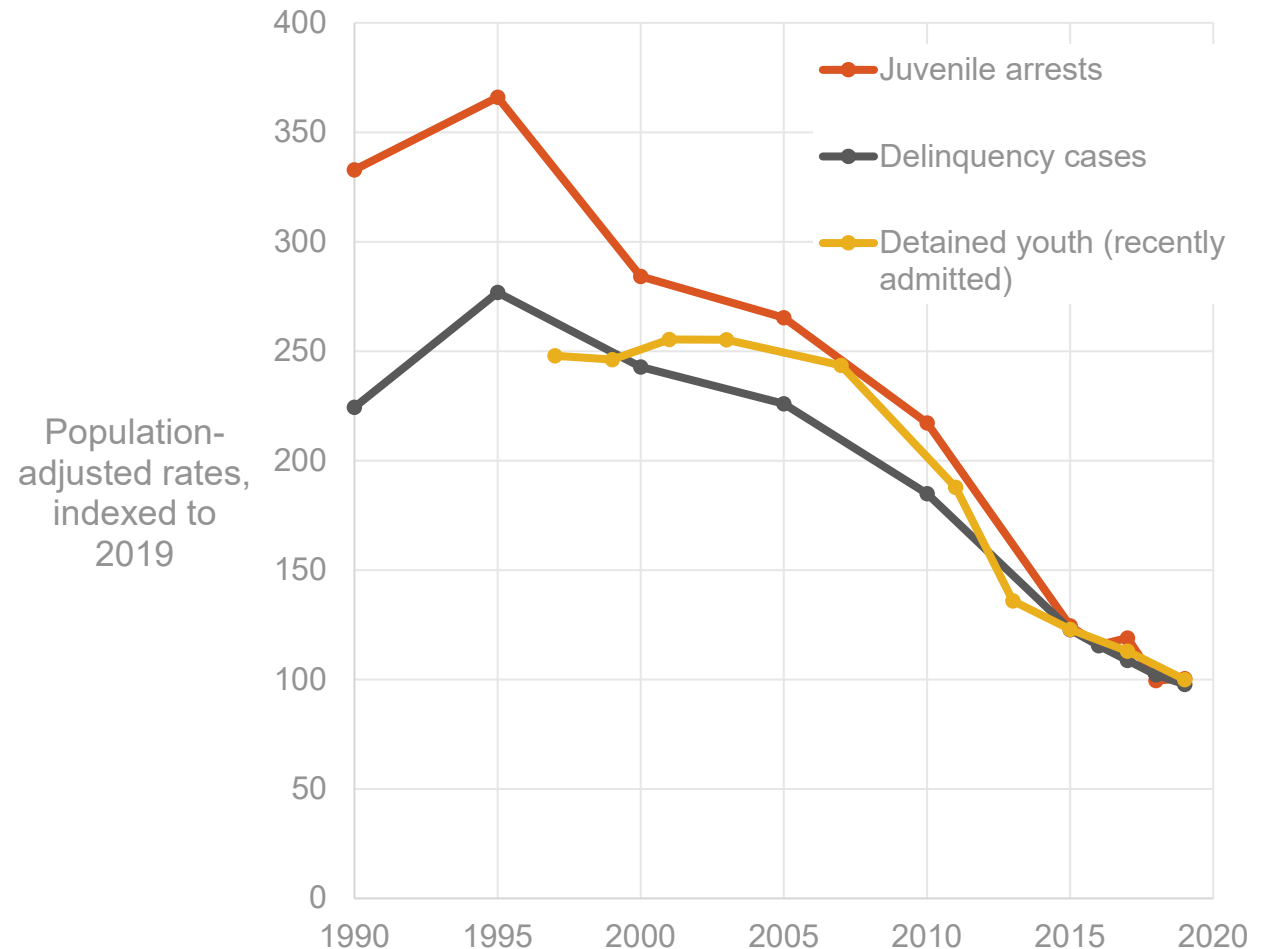




JUVENILE JUSTICE: PAST LESSONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS

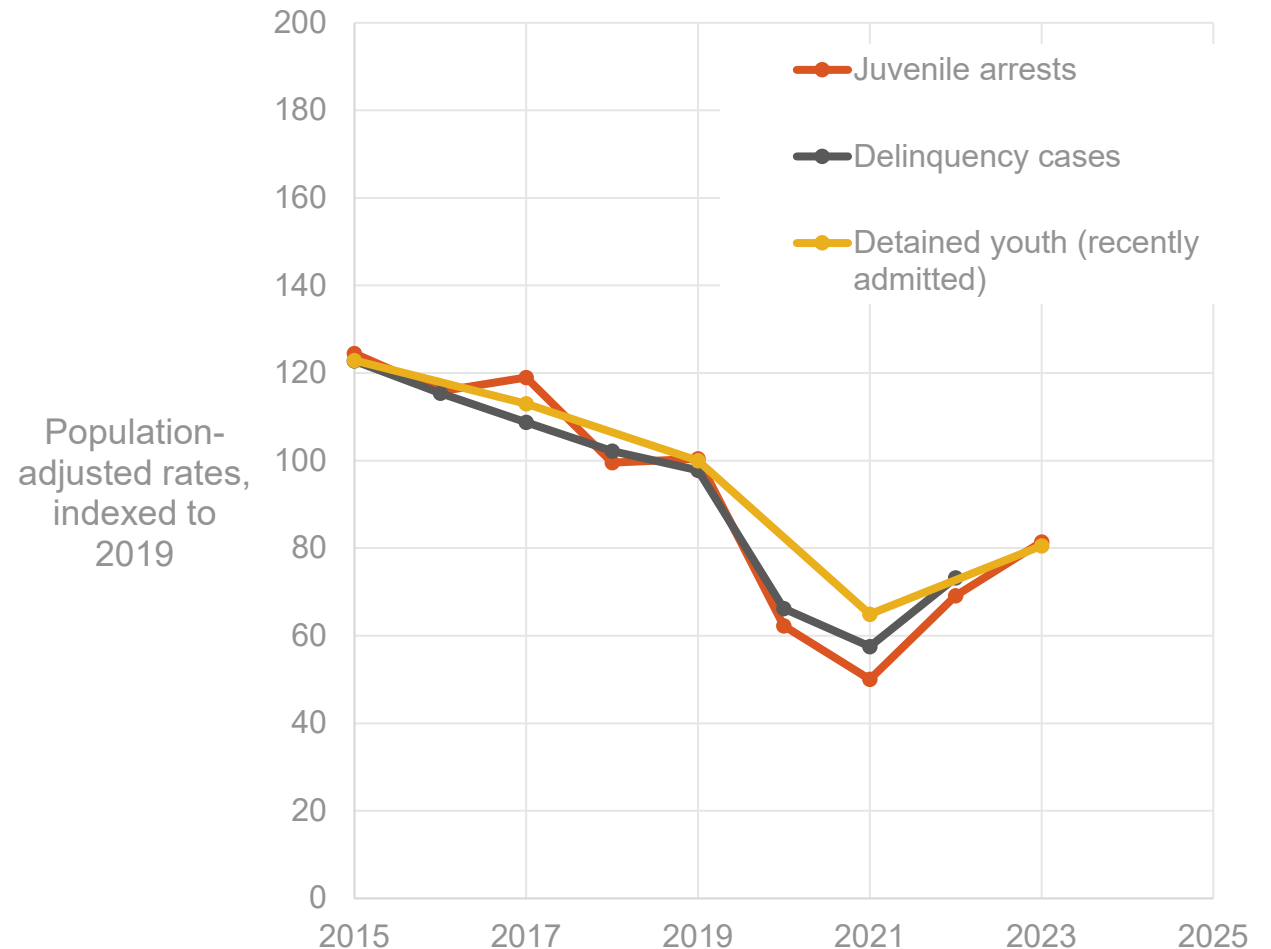
Long-Term Trends

- No single, best indicator of youth crime – but multiple sources tell a consistent story:
 - After peaking in the mid-1990s, crimes committed by young people fell rapidly and steadily for more than 20 years
 - From 1995 to 2019, depending on the indicator used, youth crime was down 60-80%
- JJ systems reduced reliance on incarceration; increased emphasis on diversion and rehabilitation



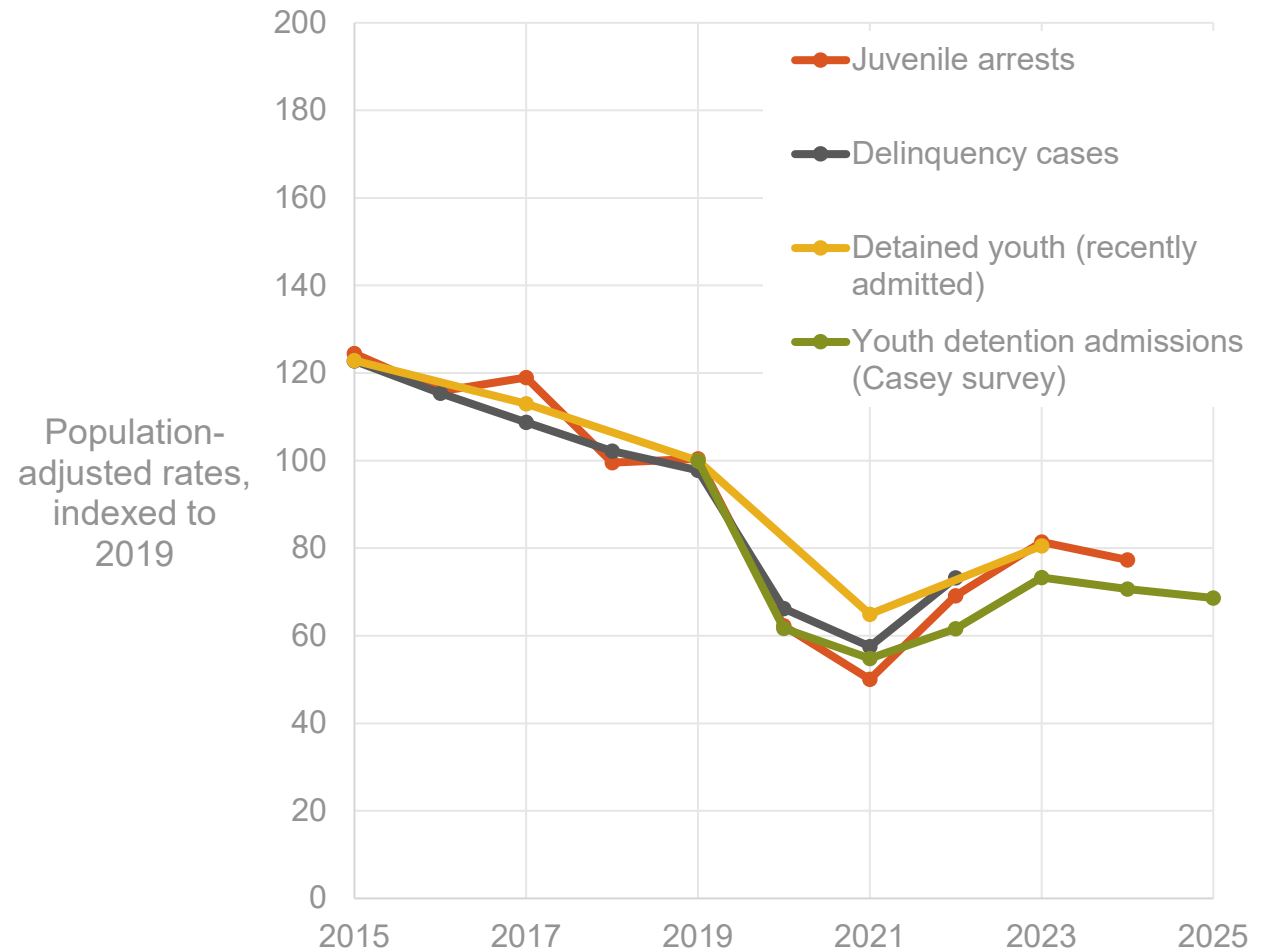
The COVID Pandemic & Its Aftermath

- The COVID-19 Pandemic disrupted these patterns
- Youth crime indicators initially plunged – but rebounded in 2022 and 2023
- Reasonable to ask if the long decline in youth crime was over – or if we were simply seeing the effects of the pandemic beginning to fade



The COVID Pandemic & Its Aftermath

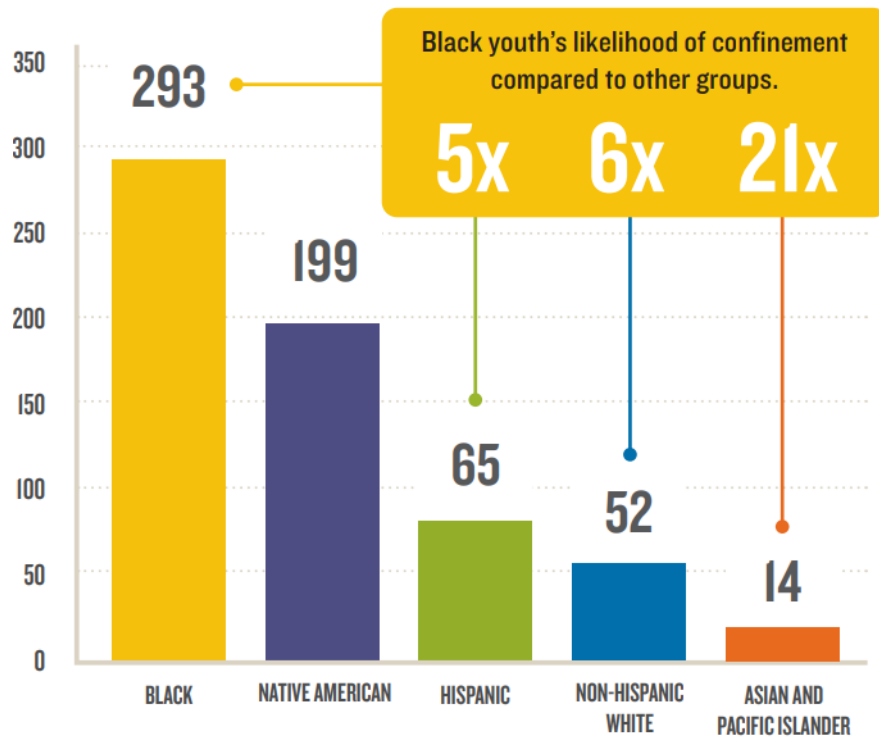
- As additional data become available, it looks like the pandemic marked an interruption in the long-term trend – not a reversal
- Still much room to improve
- JJ system policies just one piece of the puzzle
- But the past few years don't negate the lessons of the previous two decades: youth justice reform and reductions in youth crime can go hand in hand



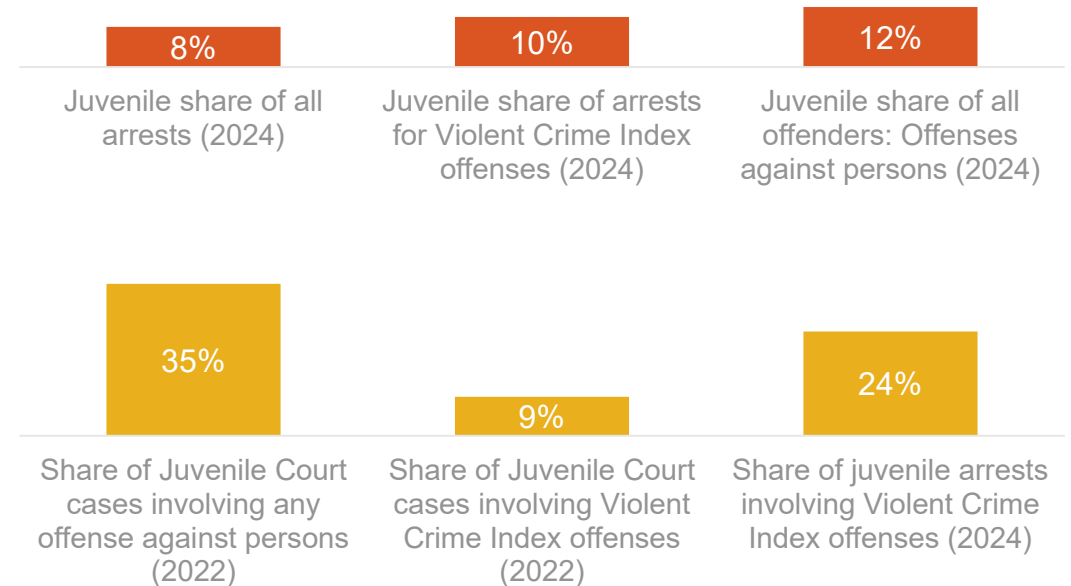
What Hasn't Changed

- Continuing salience of race & ethnicity

YOUTH CONFINEMENT RATE IN 2023 *per 100,000 youth*



- False conflation of “youth crime” and “violent crime”



What Have We Learned?

Key elements of effective youth justice strategies

- Providing accountability in tandem with resources and opportunities
- Connecting young people with caring adults
- Restoring, rather than severing, ties to family and community

Less youth incarceration is compatible with less youth crime

- Fell in tandem for 20+ years
- Rose in tandem in the aftermath of the pandemic
- Can be brought down together again with renewed commitment to what works

Sources

- **Population by age:** C. Puzzanchera, A. Sladky, and W. Kang, "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2023" (U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2025). Downloadable (<https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>)
- **Offenders:** National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), Table 8: Offenders, Adult and Juvenile Age Category, by Offense Category, 2024. Downloadable (<https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/downloads>).
- **Arrests:** Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR), Arrest by Age and Gender tables, Total and for each of the four Violent Crime Index offenses (murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery), for the calendar years 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015-2024. Downloadable (<https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/arrest>)
- **Juvenile Court cases:** Juvenile Court Statistics Program (JCS), Delinquency cases disposed for the years 1990-2022. Downloadable (<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/statistical-briefing-book/data-analysis-tools/ezajcs>). Status offense cases disposed for 2022 found in S. Hockenberry and C. Puzzanchera, "Juvenile Court Statistics 2022" (National Center for Juvenile Justice, November 2024). Downloadable (<https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/publications/juvenile-court-statistics-2022.pdf>)
- **Continuing salience of race & ethnicity:** Annie E. Casey Foundation, Youth Incarceration in the United States (infographic, June 2025). Downloadable (<https://www.aecf.org/resources/youth-incarceration-in-the-united-states>)
- **Detained Youth (recently admitted):** Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) count of youth in residential placement on the census date with a placement status of Detained who had been in placement for 0 or 1 days. Historically a useful proxy for the number of young people detained; and closely correlated with the JCS annual count of disposed delinquency cases that were detained. Downloadable (<https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>)
- **Youth Detention Admissions:** Monthly Youth Detention Survey (MYDS) sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Annual detention admissions tabulated based on monthly admissions in MYDS participating jurisdictions from January 2020 through June 2025 (annual figures estimated for 2019 based on admissions in the pre-COVID months of Jan-Mar 2020; and for 2025 based on monthly totals for Jan-Jun 2025). The MYDS covers approximately 20% of the United States youth population, and trends in MYDS admissions from 2020 though 2023 have closely tracked national detention admission indicators from the JCS and CJRP. Viewable online and downloadable (https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/empact.solutions/viz/MonthlyYouthDetentionSurveyDashboard_17321344700320/A1)

Thank You!

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