

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 25-163—sSB 1542

Judiciary Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF HANDCUFFS ON YOUNG CHILDREN

SUMMARY: This act generally prohibits police officers from using handcuffs to restrain any child the officer knows is under age 14. This prohibition begins at the point of the child's initial contact with the police officer and applies as long as the child has not been adjudicated a delinquent.

The act makes exceptions when handcuffing is:

1. necessary for public safety,
2. necessary because the child is using or threatening to use physical force on a police officer who is engaging with the child, or
3. ordered by the court under its existing policy on using mechanical restraints in court.

The act also makes a technical change.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

Judicial Branch Policy on Using Mechanical Restraints in Juvenile Courts

Judicial branch policy, as authorized by existing law, establishes a presumption that mechanical restraints (including handcuffs) will be removed from a juvenile before and during his or her appearance in juvenile court. Under the policy, in-court restraints may be used only following a judge's order in keeping with the policy.

The policy requires a Court Support Services Division officer to complete a form before transporting a juvenile to the juvenile court. On the form, the officer must indicate whether restraints are recommended and, if so, the types. The policy specifies factors that must be present to support using these restraints (e.g., whether the juvenile has threatened or attempted to escape or is charged with a class A felony).

If the juvenile's lawyer or other parties disagree with the recommendation, they may address the court before the juvenile appears in court. After hearing from all parties, the judge determines which restraints, if any, are appropriate.

Any restraints removed under this policy must be immediately reapplied after the court hearing, in a secure area outside the courtroom.