



**HARVARD Kennedy School**

*Program in Criminal Justice  
Policy and Management*

# **Connecticut Juvenile Justice Reform Action Research Project**

Presentation to JJPOC April 21, 2016

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# How should we define “juveniles” in our justice system?

After a century of juvenile justice law  
and policy, we are still figuring this  
out...

1899 – 1st Juvenile Court  
established in Cook County,  
Illinois (1939 photo)



# In U.S., 16-18 marks the traditional upper age of juvenile jurisdiction

- 1990's: Turbulent time for juvenile justice. All states made it easier to try kids as adults, “adult time for adult crime”
- Last ten years, national trend to move age **upwards** to 18 (e.g., CT, MA, IL, NH)
- Higher ages of maturity reflected in other areas of the law too, e.g.:
  - Drinking: Age **21**
  - Affordable Care Act: Can remain on parents' health insurance until age **26**



# Why move the age up?

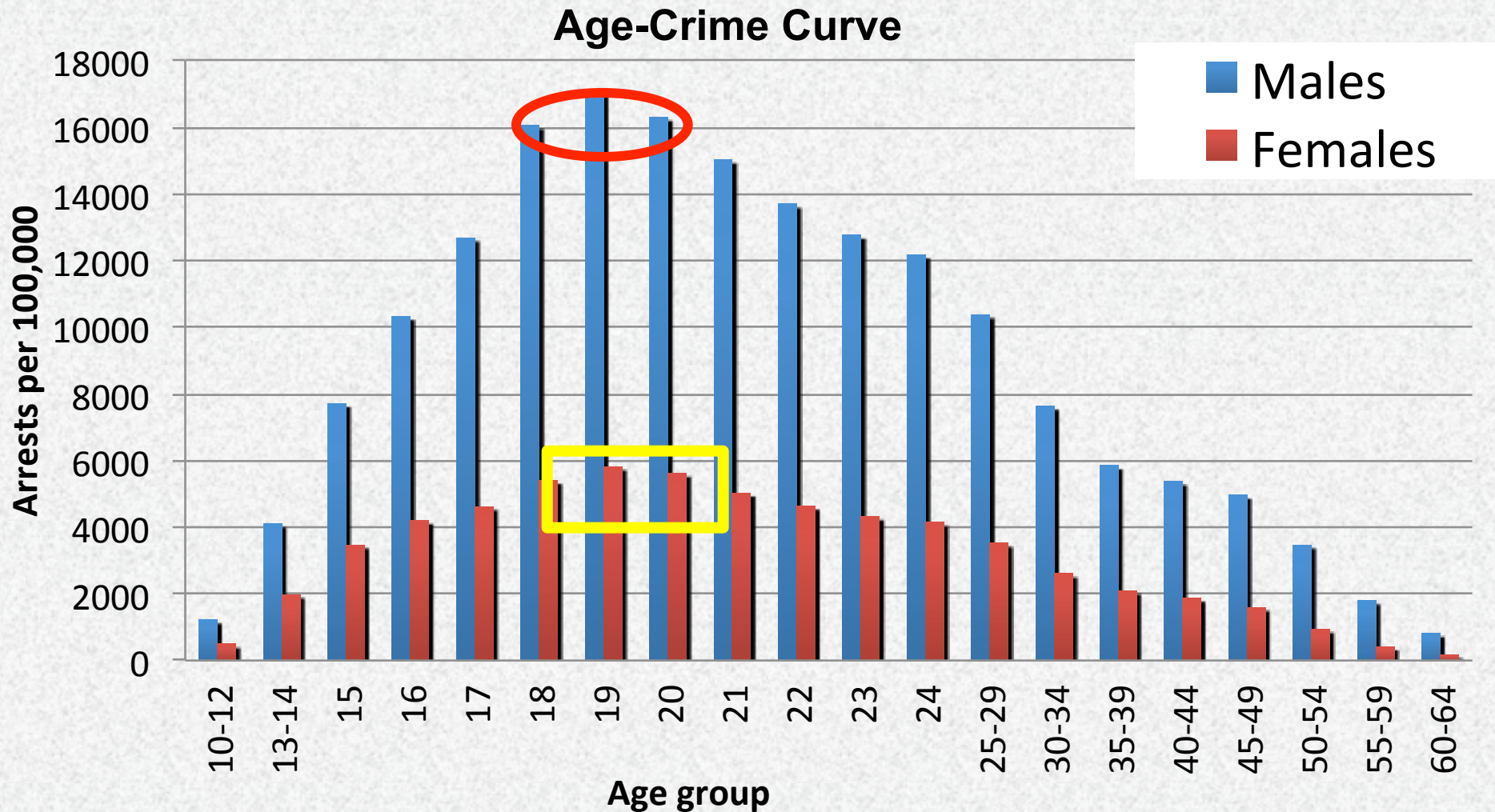
- Recent research on neurobiology and developmental psychology found that youth are:
  - More volatile in emotionally charged settings
  - Susceptible to peer and other outside influences
  - Risk takers; impulsive
  - Less future-oriented
  - Above factors are worse for youth who have experienced trauma
- How many of us are “grown up” by 18? Sociological data tells us that young adults enter into traditional, stabilizing adult roles later than previous generations
  - Transition to adulthood has been prolonged
  - e.g., in 1960, 45% of 18-24 year olds married. In 2010, only 9% married.

(All factors identified as **constitutionally significant** in series of U.S. Supreme Court cases)

**Young adults resemble juveniles in several important respects.**

# AGE TRENDS IN RISKY BEHAVIOR

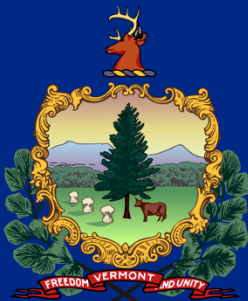
An opportunity to effectively intervene & increase public safety: Relatively few start criminal careers after 25, most age out by 25



# CT is a LEADER but is not alone...



**ILLINOIS:** Bill to Raise the Age to 21 (HB6308) for misdemeanor offenses; recently voted favorably by House Judiciary – Criminal Criminal.



**VERMONT:** Committee on Judiciary recently voted favorably House Bill 95 which requires the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee to evaluate the resources necessary to expand juvenile jurisdiction to age 21. Bill also expands youthful offender status up to age 22 and requests study to evaluate resources needed to increase youthful offender status from 22 to 25.



## IN EUROPE: Examples of many different approaches for young adult justice



**GERMANY:** The age of juvenile court in Germany has been **21** since after World War II. Runs separate facility (Neustrelitz Prison) for youth between 19 – 25.



**NETHERLANDS:** In 2014, raised the age of their family court to **23**.



**U.K.:** **Maturity** is a **statutory mitigating factor** for young adults and probation is required to offer the courts maturational guidance in their pre-sentence reports.



## CT Reform Action Research Project

**Goal:** Engage in an action-research project to provide expertise, guidance and targeted support to Connecticut's young offender reform efforts.

### Scope of work:

- Review literature/research (from life course criminology, neurobiology, and developmental psychology) and translate complex research findings into practical public policy implications
- Identify best and emerging practices that other jurisdictions (nationally and internationally) have implemented specifically for young, court involved offenders that have applicability to court-involved young people in Connecticut;
- Collaborate with the Tow Youth Justice Institute on drafting a report examining the implications of raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 21 and its impact on community supervision that will be incorporated into the State of Connecticut's Strategic Plan for Community Supervision.
- Partner with a work group designated by the JJPOC.

## Timeline for this project:

- Data requests will be forwarded shortly following this meeting. **Please respond as quickly as possible.**
- Work collaboratively for next 5 months and help draft a report for the JJPOC's review by **September 30, 2016.**
- Throughout this project, we will be available to garner input from the JJPOC and will provide updates on work at future JJPOC meetings.

# Some important issues have already been identified:

See handout: List of questions/issues raised by Gov. Malloy in letter to JJPOC (dated 1/28/2016)

- How does Connecticut remain compliant with federal requirements regarding sight and sound separation?
- What type of accommodations are necessary for the housing and transportation of the new young adult population?
- What changes are required to rules regarding parent notifications and parent liability?
- Are new processes required for Motor Vehicle infractions and arrests?
- How will the proposed reforms impact the agencies involved?

*Looking forward to working with JJPOC and University of New Haven to address these and other issues.*



# New Resource: Young Adult Justice Website Clearinghouse

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/young-adult-justice>

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## Young Adult Justice

Read this **NEW** piece **Changing the Life Trajectory of Justice-Involved Young Adults in San Francisco** by **Katherine Weinstein Miller** as part of a new series, *Developments in Young Adult Justice* curated by the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at HKS that features updates by **Young Adult Justice** experts, advocates, researchers, and practitioners from around the US and abroad... **MORE**



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**NEWS**

- **NY Times**  
How to Reduce Crime: Stop Charging Children as Adults 2/26/16  
What Age Should Young Criminals Be Tried as

**RESEARCH**

- **CALL TO ACTION** by OJP & NIJ  
Environmental Scan of Developmentally-Informed Practices for Young Adults in the Criminal Justice System
- **Exec Session on Community Corrections**

**EVENTS**

- **CT Judiciary Committee Hearing** on Young Adult Justice 3/23 (Connecticut General Assembly)
- **US Atty Gen Loretta Lynch** opens panel discussion in DC Justice-

## Additional Resources

Council of State Governments, *Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Young Adults in the Juvenile and Adult Criminal Justice System* (Nov 2015):

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Transitional-Age-Brief.pdf>

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Study Group on the Transition from Juvenile Delinquency to Adult Crime Report:

<http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/Pages/delinquency-to-adult-offending.aspx#reports>

ROCA report, *Pioneers in Young Adult Justice* (Feb 2016):

<http://rocainc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Pioneers-in-Young-Adult-Justice-Roca-1-1.pdf>

Schiraldi, Western and Bradner, *Community-Based Responses to Justice-Involved Young Adults* (September 2015):

[www.hks.harvard.edu/content/download/77657/1742659/version/2/file/ESCC-CommunityBasedResponsesJusticeInvolvedYA.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/content/download/77657/1742659/version/2/file/ESCC-CommunityBasedResponsesJusticeInvolvedYA.pdf)

## Questions or Comments?