

Raise the Age

CHILDREN ARE LESS MATURE THAN ADULTS. MOST LAWS RECOGNIZE THIS BY REQUIRING TEENAGERS TO WAIT UNTIL THEY ARE 18 TO VOTE, JOIN THE MILITARY, OR LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

BUT WHILE THE LAW SAYS 17-YEAR-OLDS ARE NOT MATURE ENOUGH FOR THOSE ACTIVITIES, IT REQUIRES THEM TO BE PUNISHED AS ADULTS WHEN THEY COMMIT A CRIME IN TEXAS.

IN 2017, NEARLY 20,000 17-YEAR-OLDS WERE ARRESTED AND SUBJECTED TO TEXAS' ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.



95% OF THOSE ARRESTS WERE FOR NONVIOLENT AND MISDEMEANOR OFFENSES.



RIGHTS FOR JUVENILES ONLY

IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM, THESE OFFENSES WOULD MOST LIKELY RESULT IN RELEASE BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY WITH ORDERS TO ATTEND REHABILITATIVE TREATMENT UNDER SUPERVISION.



INSTEAD, 17-YEAR-OLDS IN TEXAS' ADULT SYSTEM ARE SUBJECTED TO DANGEROUS CONDITIONS AND A LIFETIME OF COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES.



DANGERS OF HOUSING YOUTH IN ADULT FACILITIES

YOUTH HELD IN ADULT FACILITIES ARE AT HIGHER RISK OF PHYSICAL & SEXUAL ASSAULT. IN FACT, 2/3 OF 16 & 17-YEAR-OLDS HELD IN U.S. ADULT FACILITIES HAD BEEN SEXUALLY VICTIMIZED BY OTHER INMATES.



YOUTH IN ADULT FACILITIES ARE 36 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO COMMIT SUICIDE.



IN ADULT FACILITIES, 17-YEAR-OLDS SPEND UP TO 23 HOURS PER DAY IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, WHICH MAY HINDER DEVELOPMENT AND LEAD TO PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM.

COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES

HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD CAN CREATE BARRIERS TO FURTHERING AN EDUCATION, GAINING EMPLOYMENT, SECURING HOUSING, AND JOINING THE MILITARY.



YOUNG PEOPLE PROSECUTED IN THE ADULT SYSTEM ARE 34% MORE LIKELY TO VIOLENTLY RE-OFFEND.



TEXAS IS 1 OF ONLY 4 STATES THAT CONTINUES TO SEND YOUTH UNDER 18 TO THE ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, MAKING US OUT OF LINE WITH BEST PRACTICES.

WHY DO WE CONTINUE TO SUBJECT KIDS WHO SIMPLY MAKE MISTAKES TO THE HARSHNESS OF THE ADULT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?

WHAT CAN THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE DO?

PASS HB 344