

# RAISE the AGE ★ TX



Everyone knows that children are less mature than adults, most laws recognize this by requiring teenagers to wait until they are 18 years old to vote, join the military, or live independently.



While the law says 17 year olds are not mature enough to make these adult decisions, it nevertheless requires that they be punished as an adult when they make a mistake and commit a crime.



25,762

In 2013, over twenty-five thousand 17 year olds were arrested and subjected to Texas' adult criminal justice system.

Larceny/Theft  
5,350



Possession of Marijuana 3,843  
Liquor Laws & Drunkenness 2,393

The overwhelming majority of those arrests were for non-violent offenses.

## RIGHTS FOR JUVENILES ONLY

In the juvenile justice system, these offenses would most likely result in release back into their community, orders to attend rehabilitative treatment, and oversight while completing treatment.



Instead, 17 year olds in the adult system are subjected to dangerous conditions and a lifetime of collateral consequences.

Physical & Sexual Violence



Youth held in adult facilities face higher risks of physical & sexual assault than they would in juvenile facilities. In fact, two-thirds of 16 & 17 year olds held in adult facilities across the U.S. were sexually victimized on more than one occasion by other inmates.

## DANGERS OF HOUSING YOUTH IN ADULT FACILITIES

Risk of Suicide



Youth confined in adult facilities are 36 times more likely to commit suicide.

Solitary Confinement



In adult facilities, 17 year olds can spend up to 23 hours a day in solitary confinement. Adolescents are still in the midst of development, and placement in solitary confinement can lead to physical and psychological harm.

# COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES

## Criminal Record

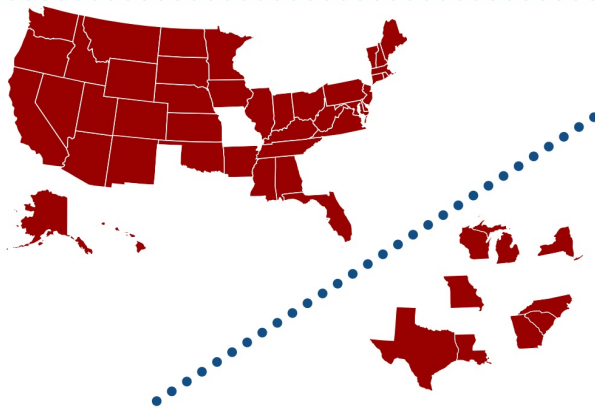


Having a criminal record can create barriers to furthering an education, gaining employment, securing housing and joining the military.

## Risk of Recidivating



Young people prosecuted in the adult system, as opposed to the juvenile justice system, are 34% more likely to violently re-offend.



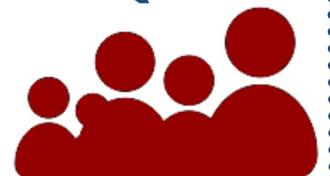
Texas is one of only nine states that continues to send youth under the age of 18 to the adult criminal justice system. Making us out of line with best practice.

Why do we continue to subject kids who make mistakes to the harshness of the adult criminal justice system?

## WHAT CAN THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE DO?



Recognize what every parent knows...a 17 year old is still a kid!



Brought to you by the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, Texans Care for Children, Texas Appleseed & ACLU.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Henneke at (512) 441-8123 Ext. 105 or visit <http://publicpolicycenter.texasjc.org>

Citations in Order of Appearance;

- Texas Department of Public Safety, Crime Records (2013).
- Bureau of Justice Statistics: Sexual Victimization Reported by Adult Correctional Authorities 2009-2011 (2014).
- The Campaign for Youth Justice: Jailing Juveniles (2007).
- Centers for Disease Control: Effects on Violence of Laws and Policies Facilitating the Transfer of Youth from the Juvenile to the Adult Justice System - A Report on Recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services (2007).