

Raise the Age: Keep Kids Out of Adult Jails and Prisons

Currently: Texas is 1 of only 6 states that sends all 17-year-olds accused of a crime to the adult criminal justice system, making Texas out of step with best practices.

- When 17-year-olds are arrested in Texas, they are treated as adults and no one is required to inform their parents of the arrest.
- An adult criminal record creates barriers to getting an education, gaining employment, securing housing, and joining the military.
- In the adult system, 17-year-olds face a higher risk of sexual assault and are 36 times more likely to commit suicide than those in juvenile facilities.
- Sending 17-year-olds to adult jails is costly and subjects sheriffs to liability. Keeping as many kids as possible out of adult jails will prevent Texas sheriffs from having to retrofit their facilities at tremendous expense or face liability for noncompliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).
- Due to “sight and sound separation” requirements under PREA, kids in adult facilities can spend up to 23 hours per day in solitary confinement, which can lead to physical and psychological harm.

Vote YES on HB 122: Raising the age of criminal responsibility would start kids off in the juvenile system, but allow judges to transfer those with the most violent offenses to the adult system if appropriate.

- After the age of juvenile jurisdiction was raised in other states, taxpayer costs were kept in check and crime rates continued to fall.
- Research shows that young people who are kept in the juvenile justice system are less likely to re-offend than those transferred into the adult system.
- This expansion of juvenile jurisdiction promotes a juvenile justice system focused on public safety, youth rehabilitation, fairness, and fiscal responsibility.

SUPPORTERS:

Texas Criminal Justice
Coalition

Texas Public
Policy Foundation

Texas Association of
Business

Texas Appleaseed

Texans Care for Children

Christian Life Commission

Goodwill Central Texas

Prison Fellowship

R Street Institute

ACLU of Texas