



RAISING THE AGE: SHIFTING TO A SAFER AND MORE EFFECTIVE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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Fauri Memorial Conference – Raise the Age

Calls for Raising the Age From the Halls of the Capitol to Juvenile Halls

“We’re going to focus on real, bipartisan approaches to criminal justice reform. We began this critical work in 2016 with the passage of the Raise the Age Act. Before this law passed through our legislature with bipartisan support, 17-year-olds who committed delinquent acts were automatically tried as adults. Because of Raise the Age, young people can now be held accountable for their actions in age-appropriate settings.”

— Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards



Calls for Raising the Age From the Halls of the Capitol to Juvenile Halls

“Once you take a young person and you send them in to a jail or a prison with hardened criminals, with real predators, don’t be surprised when they come out hard and they come out worse. We have to stop the cycle and that’s what Raise the Age is all about. Treat 16- and 17-year-olds like 16- and 17-year-olds and stop the cycle of madness of throwing young lives away. That’s what Raise the Age is all about. It took 12 long years to get Raise the Age passed, but this year we got it done and this year, this state says no more to the cycle of madness.”

— New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo



Calls for Raising the Age From the Halls of the Capitol to Juvenile Halls

“If I were kept in the juvenile system, I would’ve already been home with a trade or a college degree in child counseling, showing I can be a good citizen in society. Instead, I’m being labeled and wrote off as a lost cause.”

—17-year-old in jail in Missouri



Why Have States Pursued Raising the Age?

- **Safer for communities**
- **Safer for young people**
- **Better for young people**
- **It's a matter of fairness**

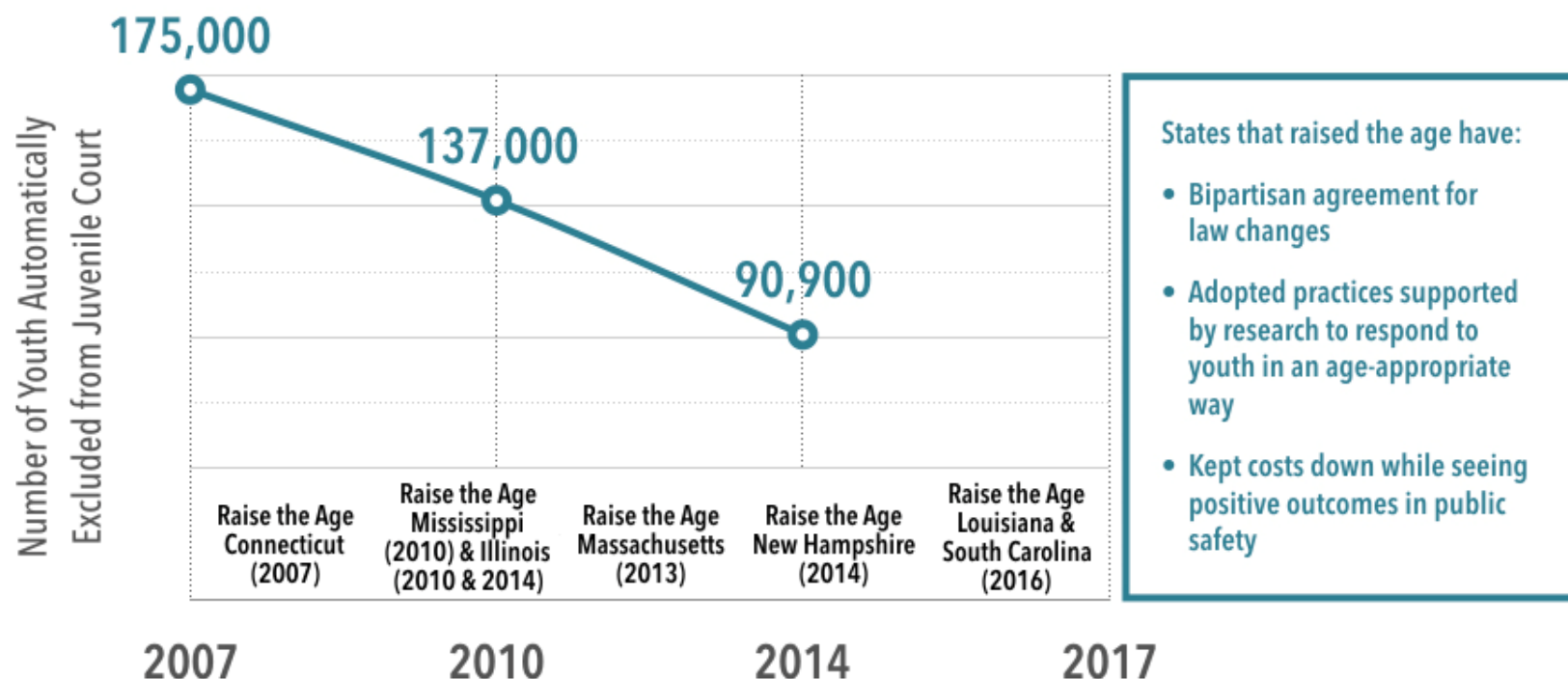


There Is Momentum for Raising the Age

- Nine of the 14 states that once automatically excluded youth from the juvenile court solely on the basis of their age passed Raise the Age legislation in the past decade.
- During this past decade, the number of young people excluded from the juvenile justice system solely because of their age was cut in half.



GRAPH A. DECREASE IN YOUNG PEOPLE AUTOMATICALLY EXCLUDED FROM JUVENILE COURT (2007-2014)



Source: Melissa Sickmund, Howard Snyder and Eileen Poe-Yamagata, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Justice Department). Melissa Sickmund and Charles Puzzanchera, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Justice Programs, Office of Justice and delinquency Prevention, U.S. Justice Department). Melissa Sickmund, email message to author, January 7, 2017.

The number of young people automatically excluded from juvenile court due to their age has dropped by nearly half.

SOME SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS HAD CONCERNS...

- **IF WE RAISE THE AGE...**
 - **Costs will go up dramatically**
 - **Juvenile Crime will go up**
 - **Juvenile Confinement will go up**

DID THIS HAPPEN?

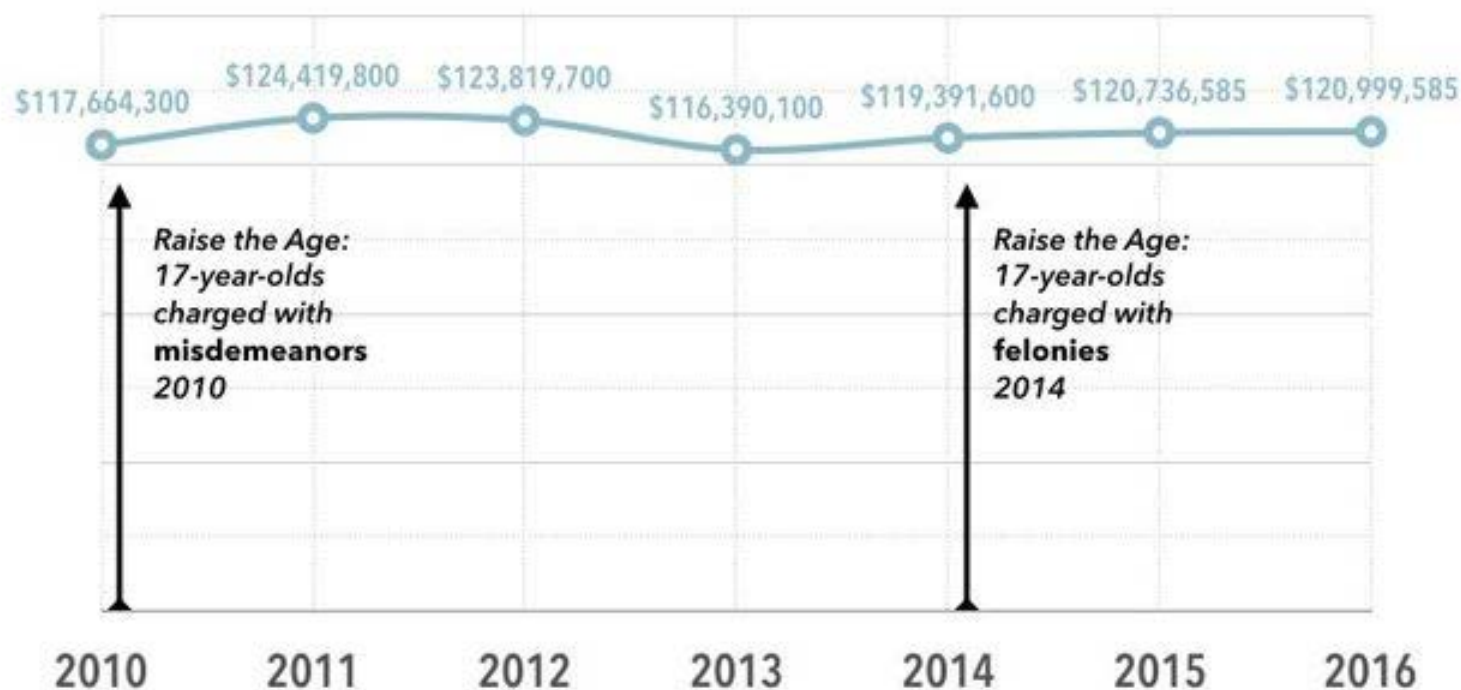




COST CONCERNS



GRAPH E: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE ANNUAL BUDGET (2007-2016)

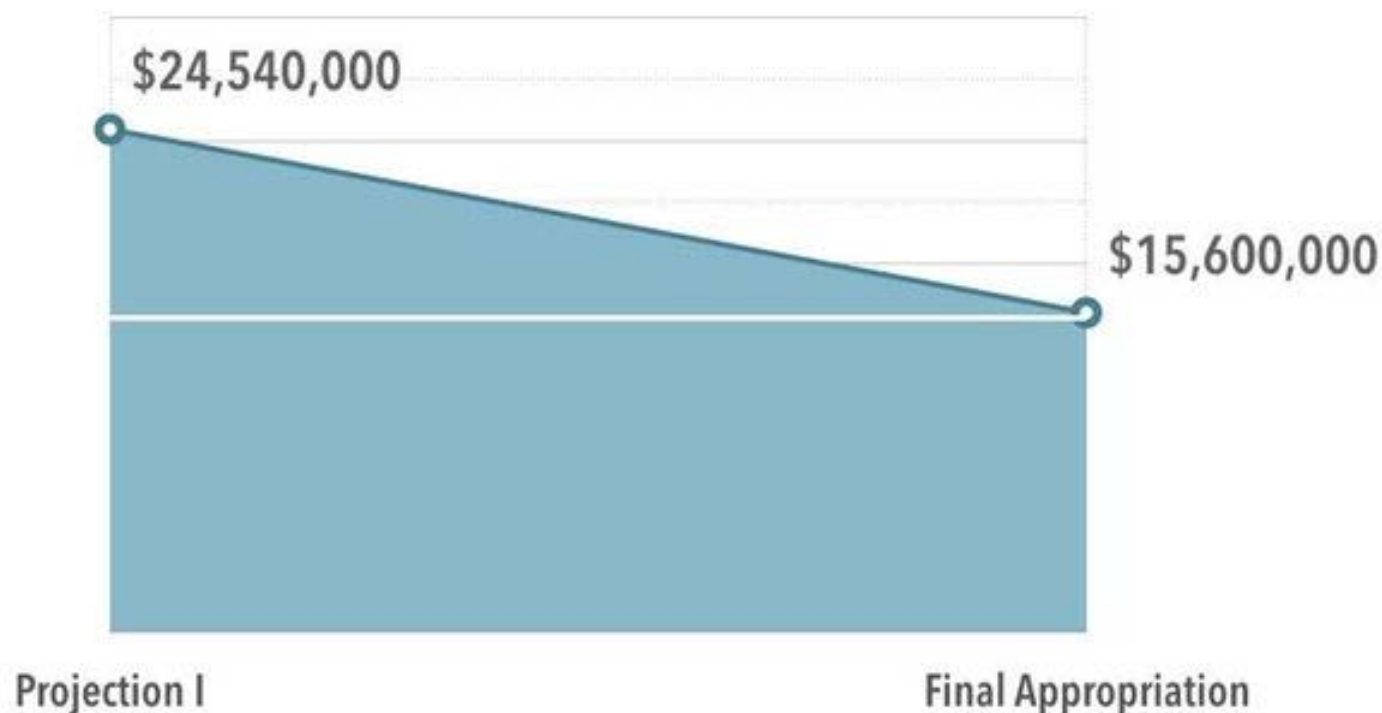


Illinois Juvenile Justice Annual Budget

Source: Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Annual Report, 2015

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice's budget has remained stable through two phases of raise the age.

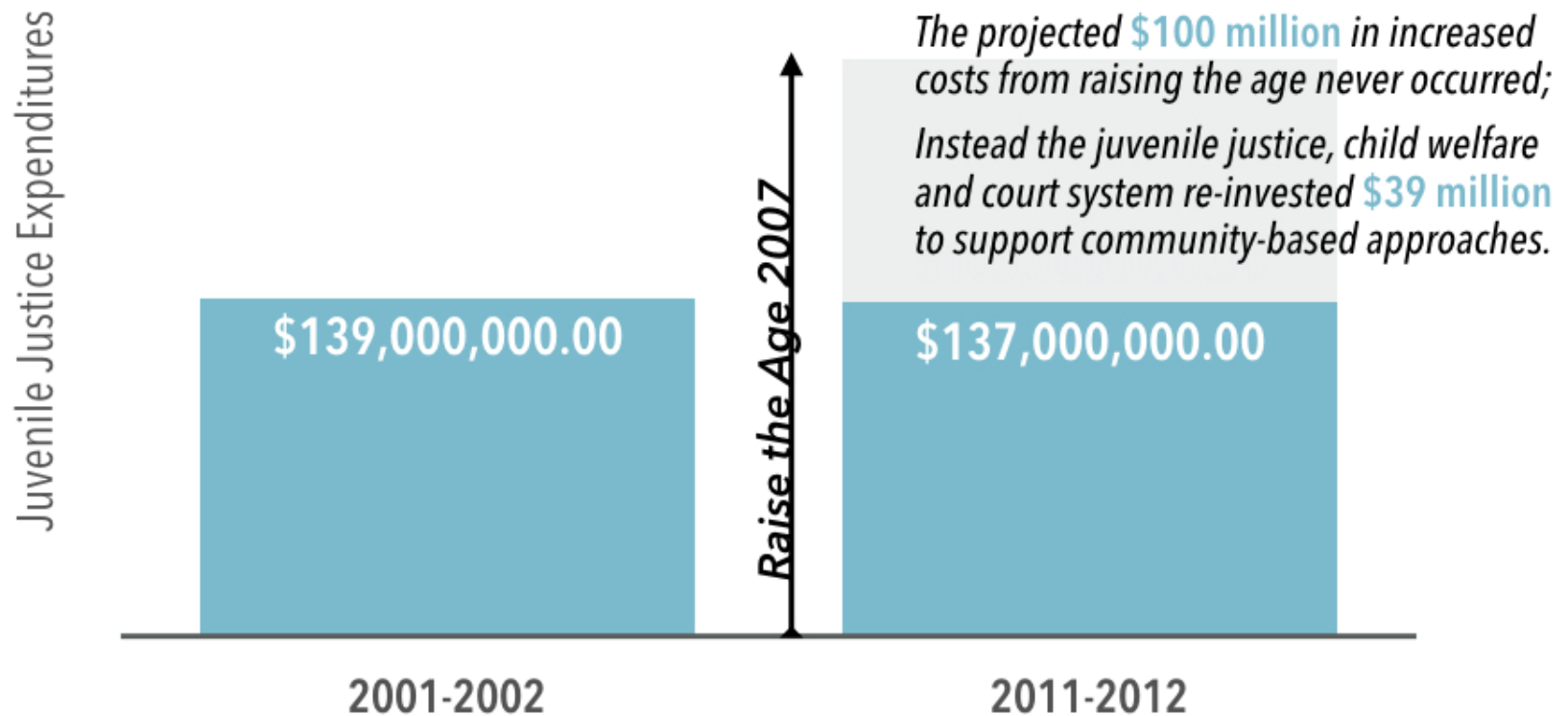
GRAPH C. MASSACHUSETTS' OVER-ESTIMATION OF RAISE THE AGE IMPLEMENTATION COSTS (2013)



Source: Impact of Raising the Age of Responsibility in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from 17 to 18. Report. (Boston, Massachusetts: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Administrative Offices of the Juvenile Court, 2013).

Raise the age implementation in Massachusetts was estimated to be 37% higher than the actual cost.

GRAPH B. CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE EXPENDITURES 2001-2012



Source: Juvenile Justice Reform in Connecticut: How Collaboration and Commitment Have Improved Public Safety and Outcomes for Youth (Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute, 2013)

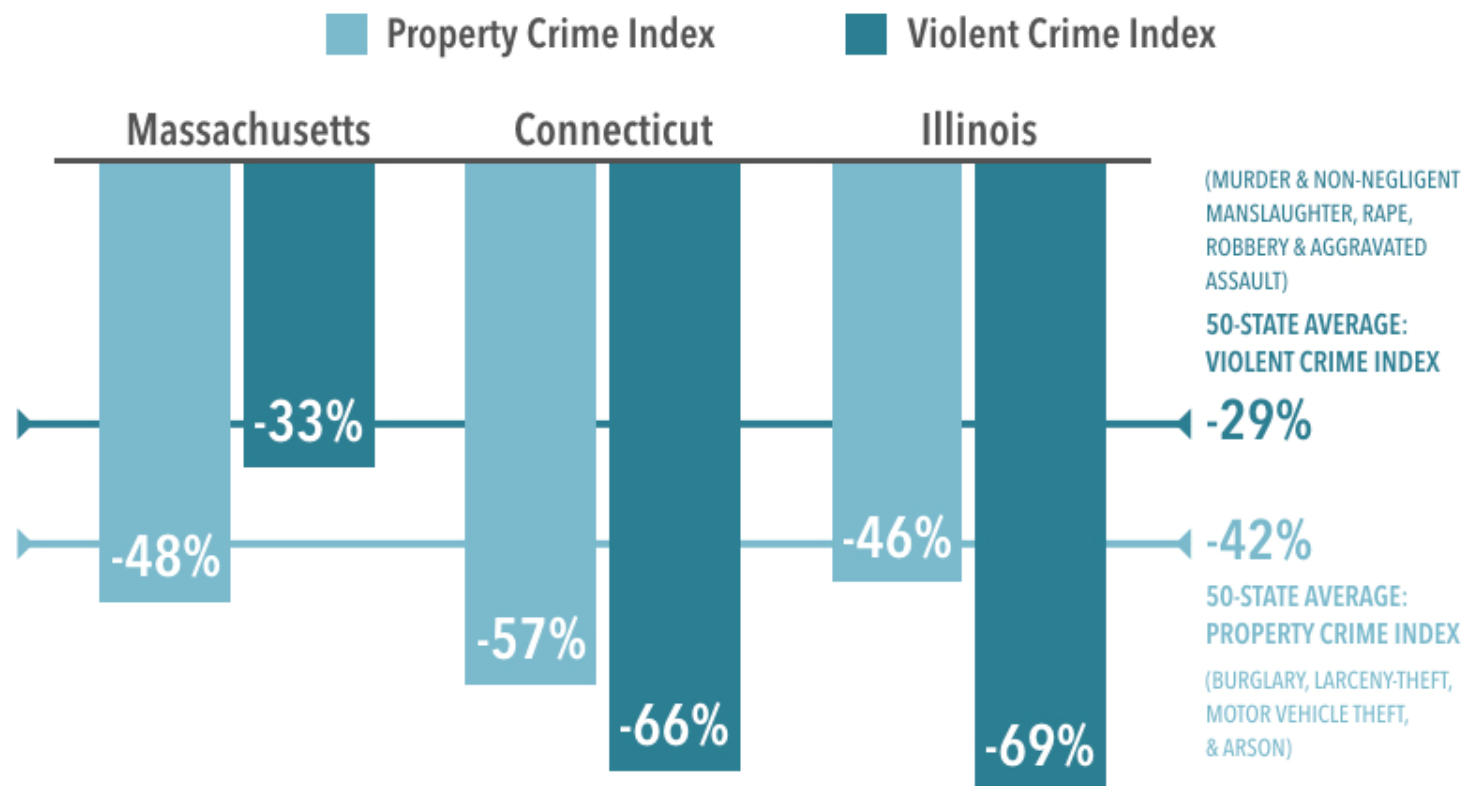
While raising the age, Connecticut reduced reliance on confinement, and reallocated money to serve youth in the community.



CRIME DROPPED



GRAPH F: FIRST GENERATION RAISE THE AGE STATES DECREASED ARRESTS (2005-2015)



Source: Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Report (2005 - 2015) While raising the age (2007), Connecticut reduced reliance on confinement, and reallocated money to serve youth in the community

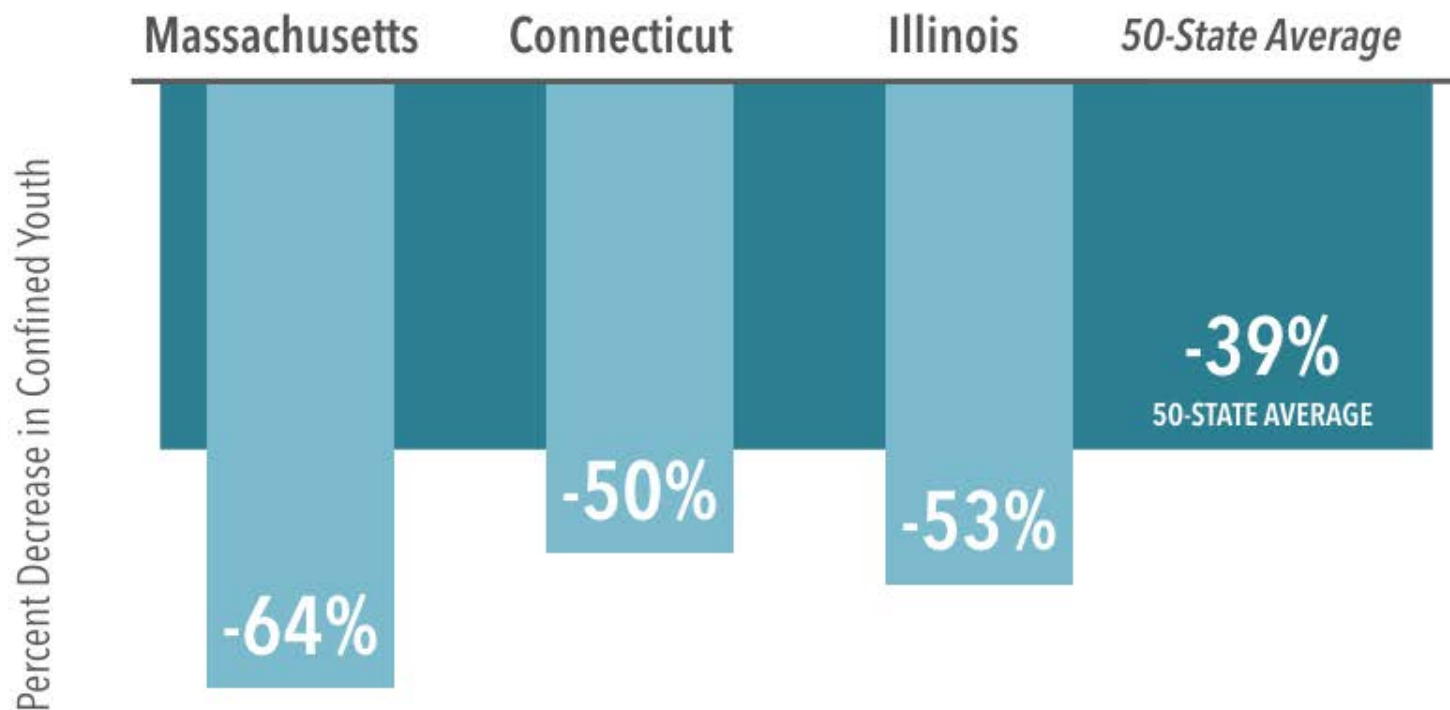
The first generation of large raise the age states outperformed the rest of the country in decreased percentages of violent and property arrests between 2005 and 2015.



CONFINEMENT REDUCED



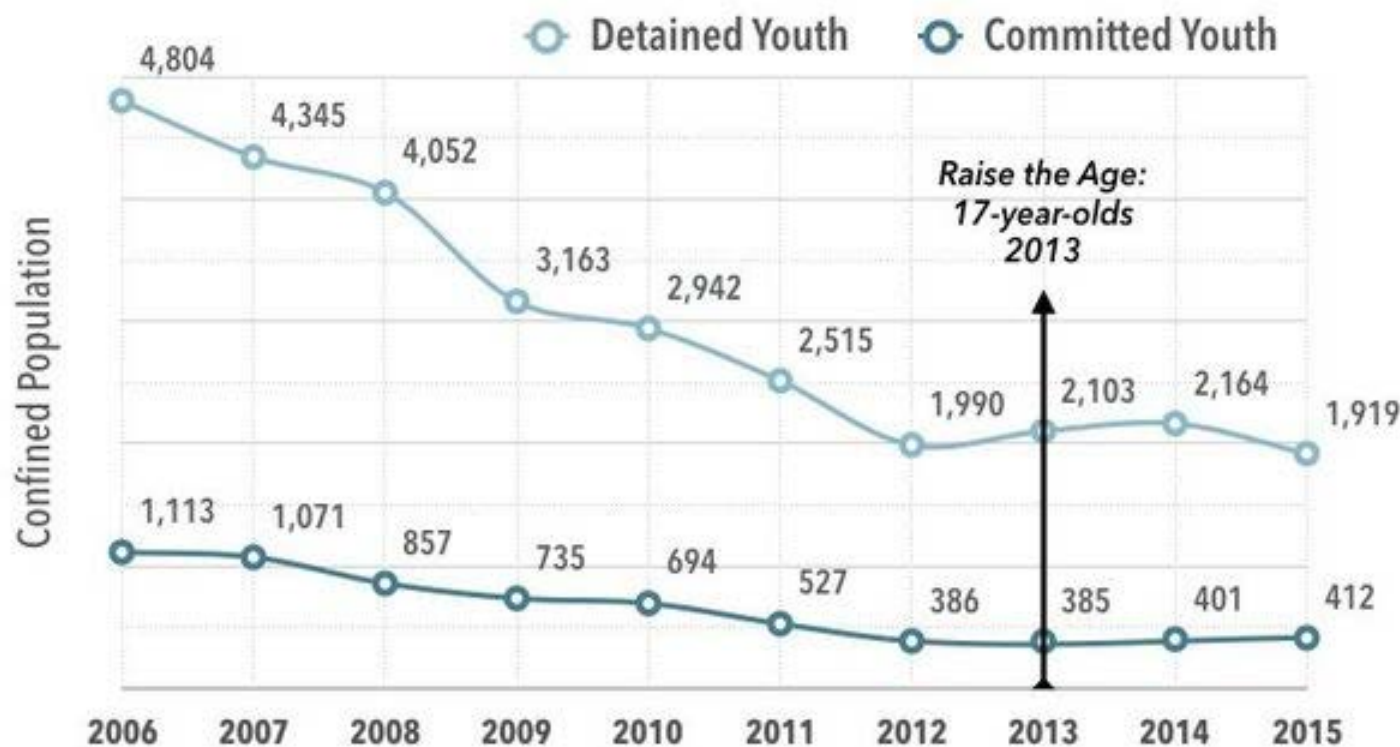
GRAPH H: RAISE THE AGE STATES DECREASE IN CONFINED YOUTH (2006-2013)



Source: Department of Justice, Office of juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention,
The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2006-2013 (2013)

The first generation of raise the age states significantly outperformed the rest of the country in reducing the number of youth committed, confined, or placed out of home.

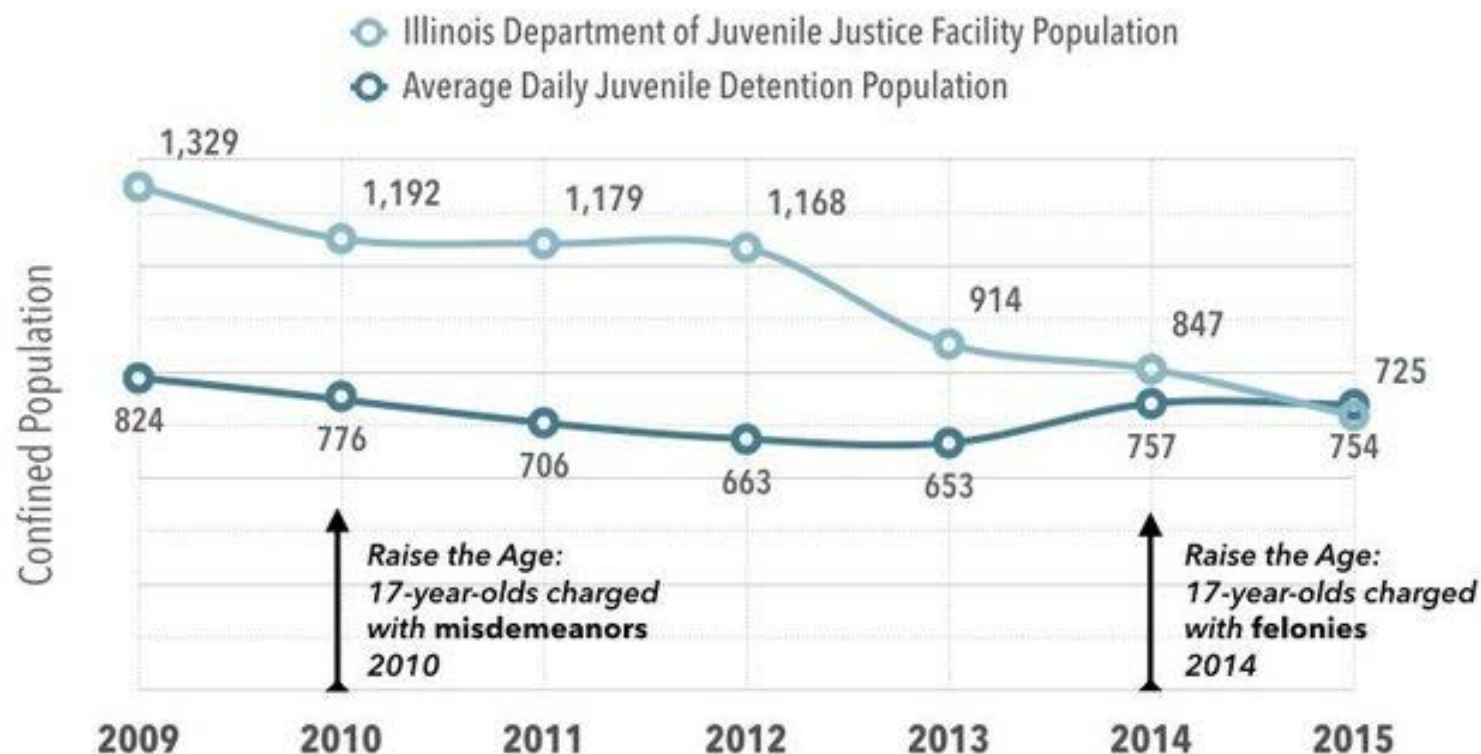
GRAPH K: MASSACHUSETTS CONFINED AND DETAINED YOUTH (2006-2015)



Source: Department of Youth Services (December, 2016).

As Massachusetts raised the age, the number of youth confined and detained dropped.

GRAPH J : ILLINOIS JUVENILE JUSTICE CONFINEMENT 2009-2015



Source: N.A., Annual Report 2015 (Springfield, IL: Illinois Juvenile Justice Department, 2016); 2014-2015 Comparison Summary and 2011 - 2015 Data Trends of Illinois Juvenile Detention Data Springfield, IL: Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission, 2016, Pg. 17)

The population of youth confined in an Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice facility decreased 45% while the juvenile detention average daily population decreased nearly 9%.

Why Weren't Systems Overwhelmed When States Raised the Age?

States can contain costs and enhance public safety while absorbing 16- and 17-yr olds into their youth justice systems by adopting a number of strategies



ROAD MAP TO RAISING THE AGE

The Seven Strategies:

- 1) Expanding the use of diversion
- 2) Making probation and aftercare approaches more effective
- 3) Addressing youth's mental health needs outside of the system
- 4) Reducing use of pretrial detention
- 5) Reducing reliance on facilities and shifting resources to community-based approaches
- 6) Keeping youth safe by complying with PREA
- 7) Improving juvenile justice systems' management of resources



Is Michigan Ready to Raise the Age?

- Expanded Use of Diversion

- *“We’re trying to intercept kids before they get involved with the courts. We don’t want it to be the case that youth have to get arrested before they get help. We need to build some viable off-ramps from the highway to the juvenile justice system.”*

—Elvin Gonzalez, Family Diversion Administrator of the
Berrien County Trial Court, Michigan

- Addressing youth’s mental health needs outside of the system
- Reducing reliance on facilities and shifting resources to community-based approaches
- Improving juvenile justice systems’ management of resources



Is Michigan Ready to Raise the Age?

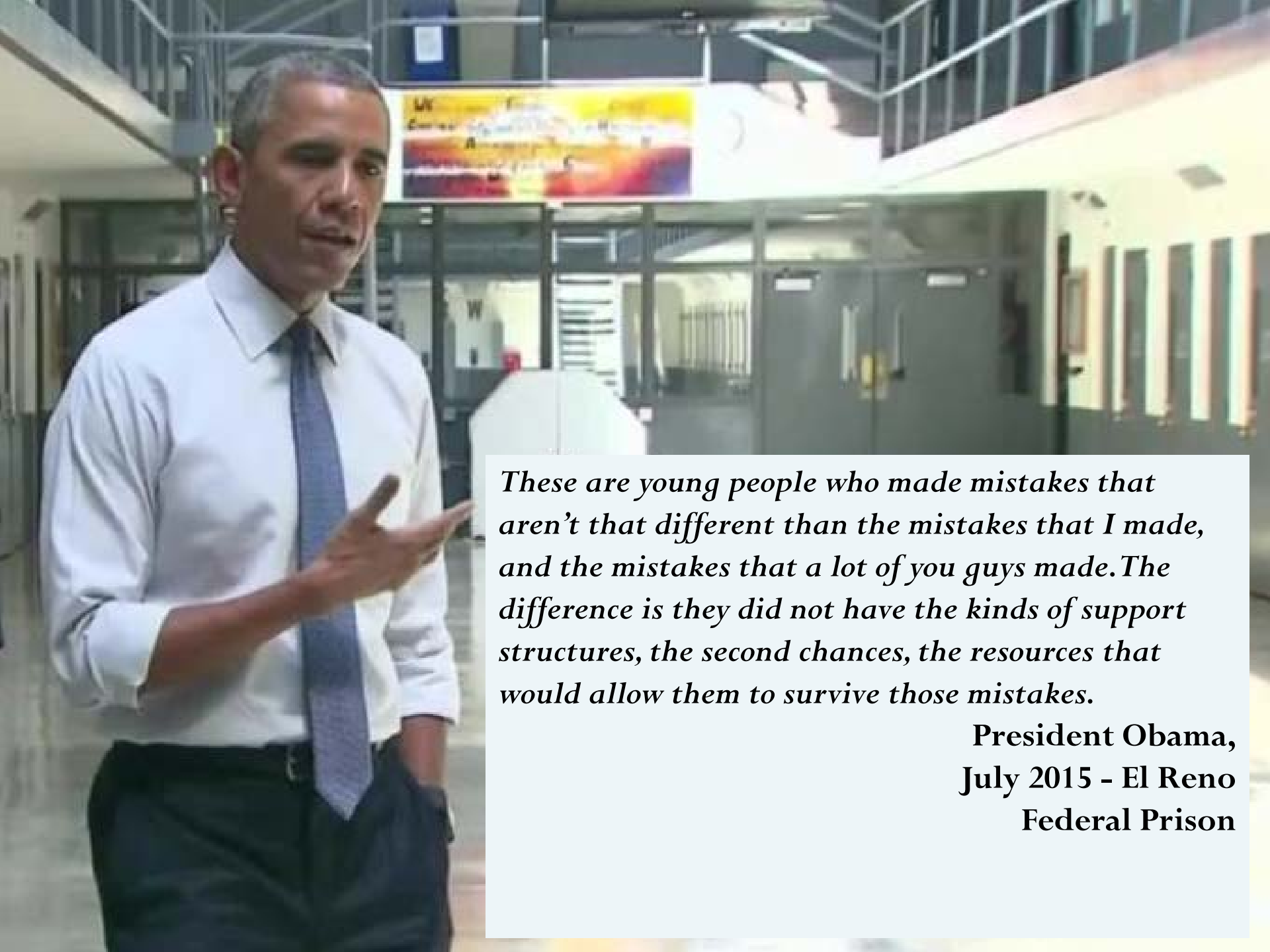
- Based on the progress that Michigan has already achieved, there is no reason that Michigan can't join other states in raising the age in a responsible, cost effective and safe manner.
- So the answer is **YES, Michigan is ready to ready to Raise the Age**



Steps Michigan Can Take To Successfully Implement Raising the Age

- **Assess what current steps have already been taken** to improve a state's approach to juvenile justice and explore opportunities to expand those efforts.
- **Connect with stakeholders** in states that have raised the age to understand how they managed the change without increasing costs.
- **Seek out technical assistance** on how to continue shifting towards more effective juvenile justice approaches.





These are young people who made mistakes that aren't that different than the mistakes that I made, and the mistakes that a lot of you guys made. The difference is they did not have the kinds of support structures, the second chances, the resources that would allow them to survive those mistakes.

**President Obama,
July 2015 - El Reno
Federal Prison**

Questions and follow up

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