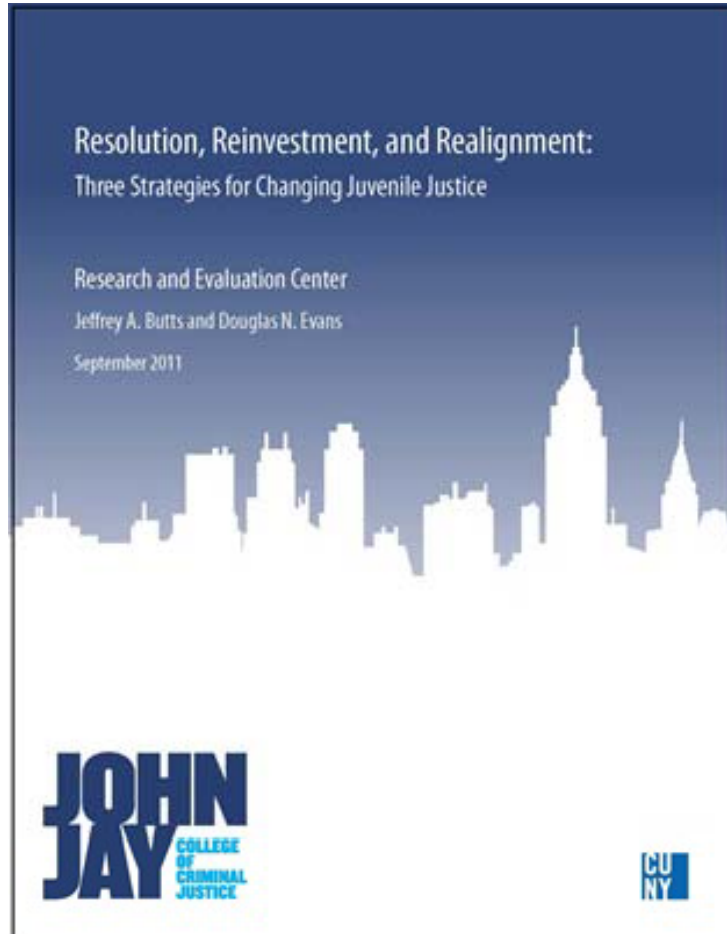# Building a Juvenile Justice System for Tomorrow

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Michigan Family Impact Seminar
Mackinac Room, House Office Building
Lansing, Michigan

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Resolution, Reinvestment, and Realignment: Three Strategies for Changing Juvenile Justice

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The Research Consensus

Incarceration:

- Not an effective method of behavior change

- Potentially toxic environment for youth and staff

- Limited impact on public safety

- The most expensive option for young offenders

- Can easily capture the policy agenda

How Can we Change Juvenile Justice...

From:

- A focus on large institutions

- Mostly public funding

- System based on supervision and control alone

- Placing youth in centralized service locations

- State funding concentrated in a few secure facilities

To:

- A full menu of options

- Mixed funding with extensive private partners

- System based on behavioral interventions and supports

- Placing services near youth and families

- State funding spread across full menu of options, used as incentive for innovation and local responsibility

Three Basic Strategies or Levers for Change

Resolution   Direct managerial influence over system behavior.

Reinvestment   Financial incentives to change system behavior.
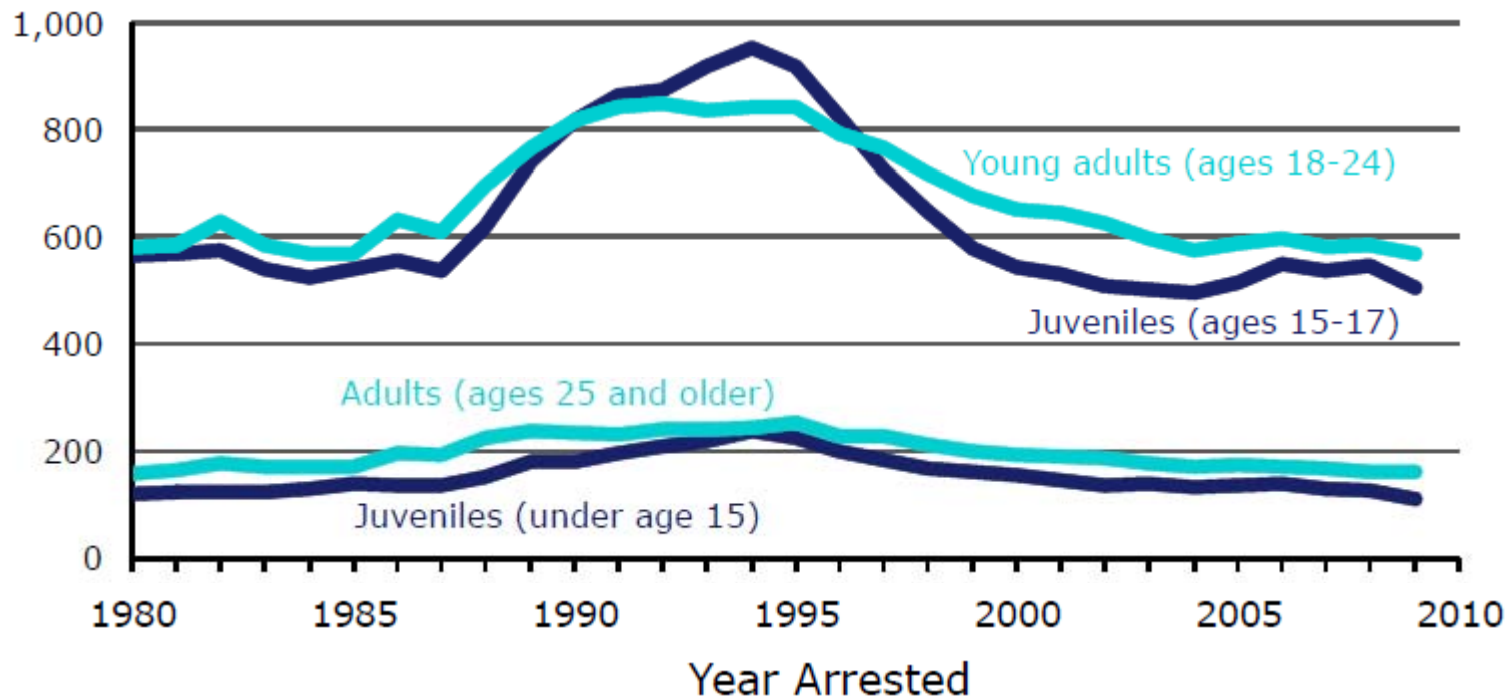
Realignment   Organizational and structural modifications to alter system behavior.

Why Focus on Changing Systems Now?

After 1995, violent crime rates declined among all age groups

Violent crime index arrests per 100,000 U.S. residents

Young adults (ages 18-24)

Juveniles (ages 15-17)

Adults (ages 25 and older)

Juveniles (under age 15)

Year Arrested

Data source: Estimates calculated by John Jay College using data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Placement Populations are Falling

Juvenile offender populations declined more in public than in private facilities between 2000 and 2008

Number of juveniles in residential facilities: U.S. totals

77,662 — Public Facilities (down 28%) — 56,157

32,464 — Private Facilities (down 24%) — 24,757

2000   2008
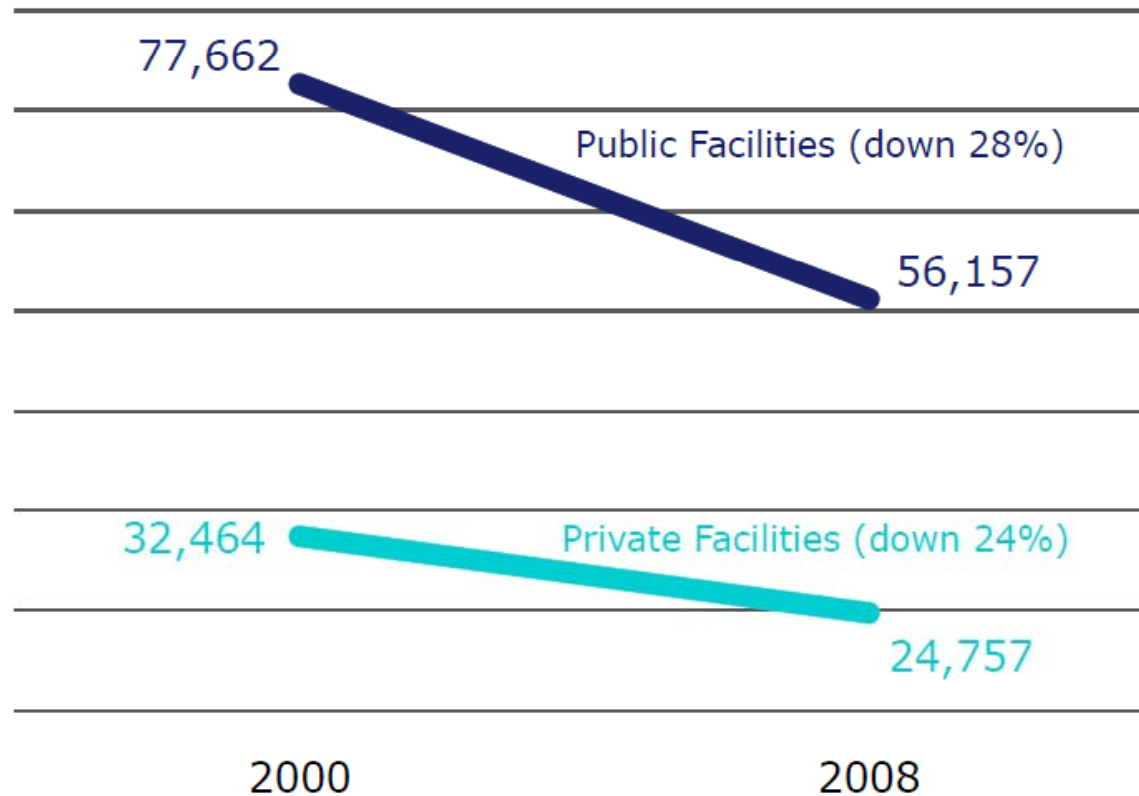
Source: Hockenberry (2011).
Data Source: Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2000 and 2008 [machine-readable files]. OJJDP [producer]. Census Bureau [collector].

Placement Populations are Falling

The number of juvenile offenders in residential facilities declined in most states between 2000 and 2008

Percent change in juvenile residential facility populations: 2000-2008
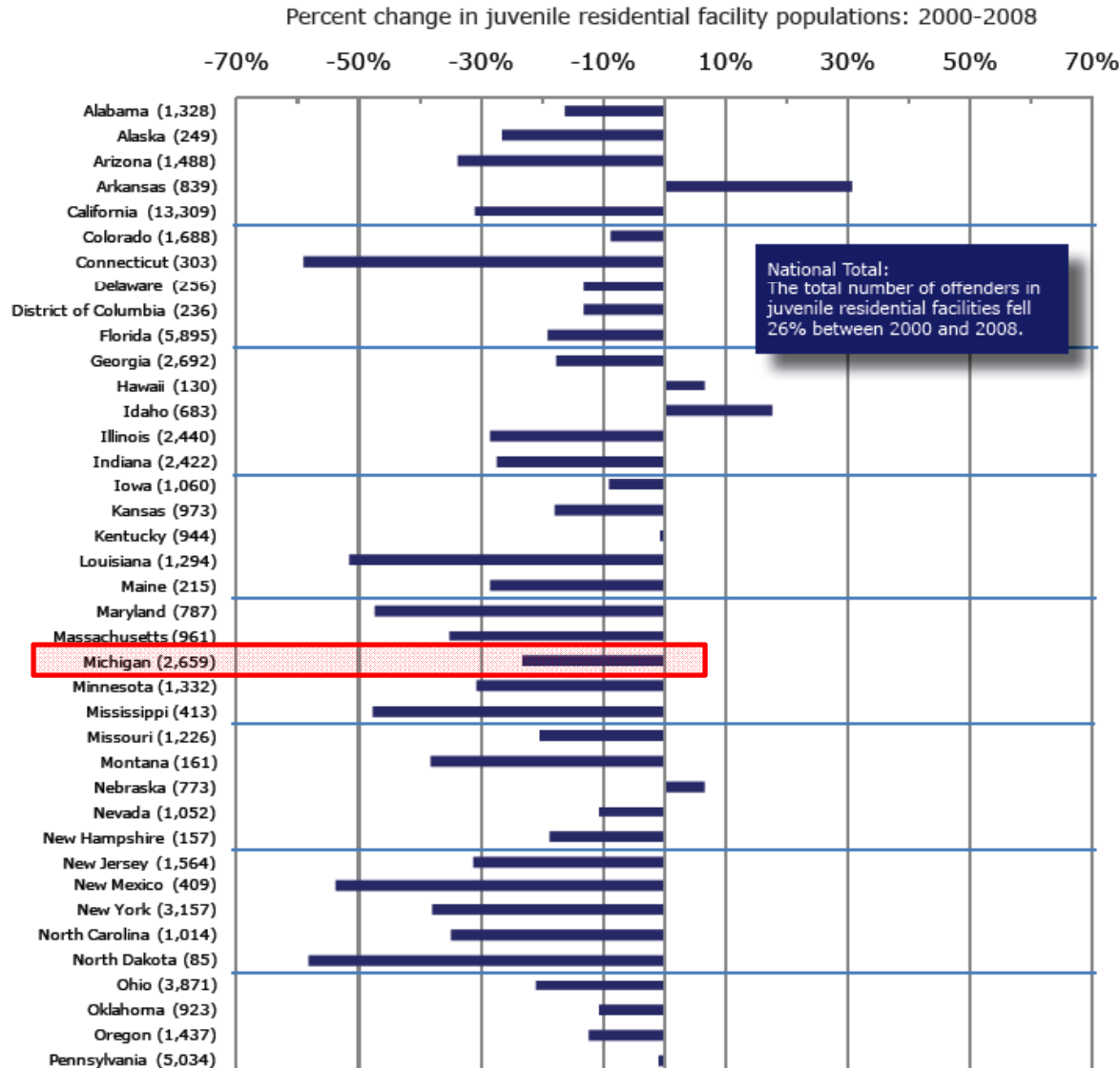
Why Did we Use Corrections so Much Before?

1) **Incapacitation** — Even if research shows that incarceration does not reduce crime overall, we want the kid off the streets.

2) **Retribution** — Secure confinement ~~disapproval of~~ ~~it cha~~ ... or not

3) **Conveni** ... ~~scale~~: food service, education, ~~ortation~~, medical costs, etc.

4) ~~...~~**ism** — Organizations within the same sector tend to resemble one another over time. It's safer to adopt structures and practices already used in other jurisdictions.

Not Likely to Change

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Key Question for Policy and Practice:

What strategies are likely to be effective now, but also sustainable under different economic conditions and a different crime environment?

Changing Juvenile Justice

Reinvestment Initiatives:

- Pennsylvania Act 148 (1976)
- Wisconsin Youth Aids (1981)
- Reclaim Ohio (1993)
- Deschutes county, Oregon (1997)
- North Carolina (1998)
- Redeploy Illinois (2004)
- California Senate Bill 681 (2007)
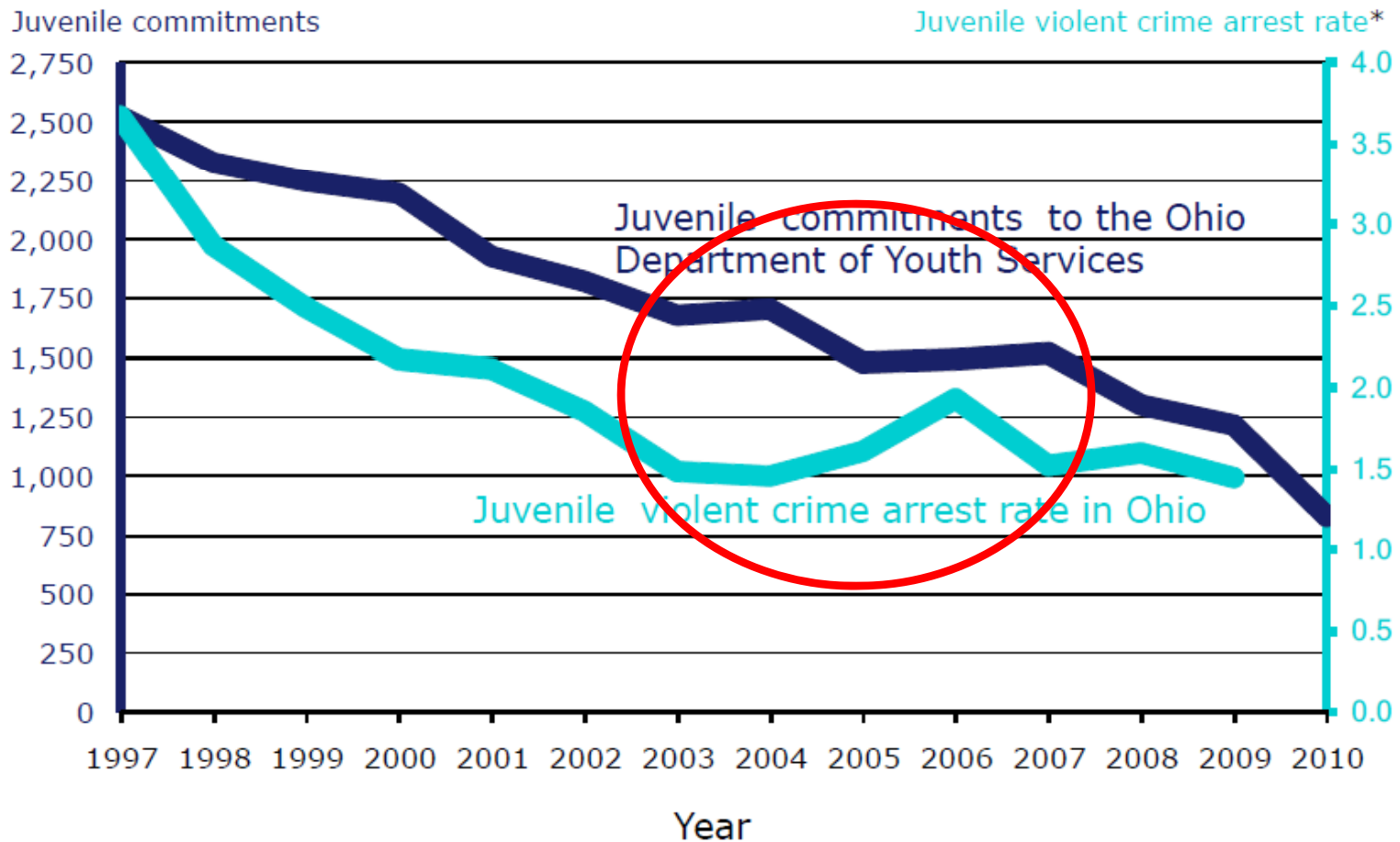- Texas Commitment Reduction Program (2009)

Resolution Initiatives:

- Massachusetts (1970s)
- Utah (1980s)
- Missouri (1990s)

Realignment Initiatives:

- Wayne County (MI) (2000)
- California Senate Bill 81 (2007)

The falling number of juvenile commitments in Ohio largely mirrors the decline in violent juvenile crime

Juvenile commitments

Juvenile violent crime arrest rate*

Juvenile commitments to the Ohio Department of Youth Services

Juvenile violent crime arrest rate in Ohio

Year

Data sources: Ohio Department of Youth Services and FBI (Uniform Crime Reports), Crime in the United States.

* Number of youth (under age 18) arrested for FBI Violent Crime Index offenses per 1,000 youth ages 10-17 in the state population.

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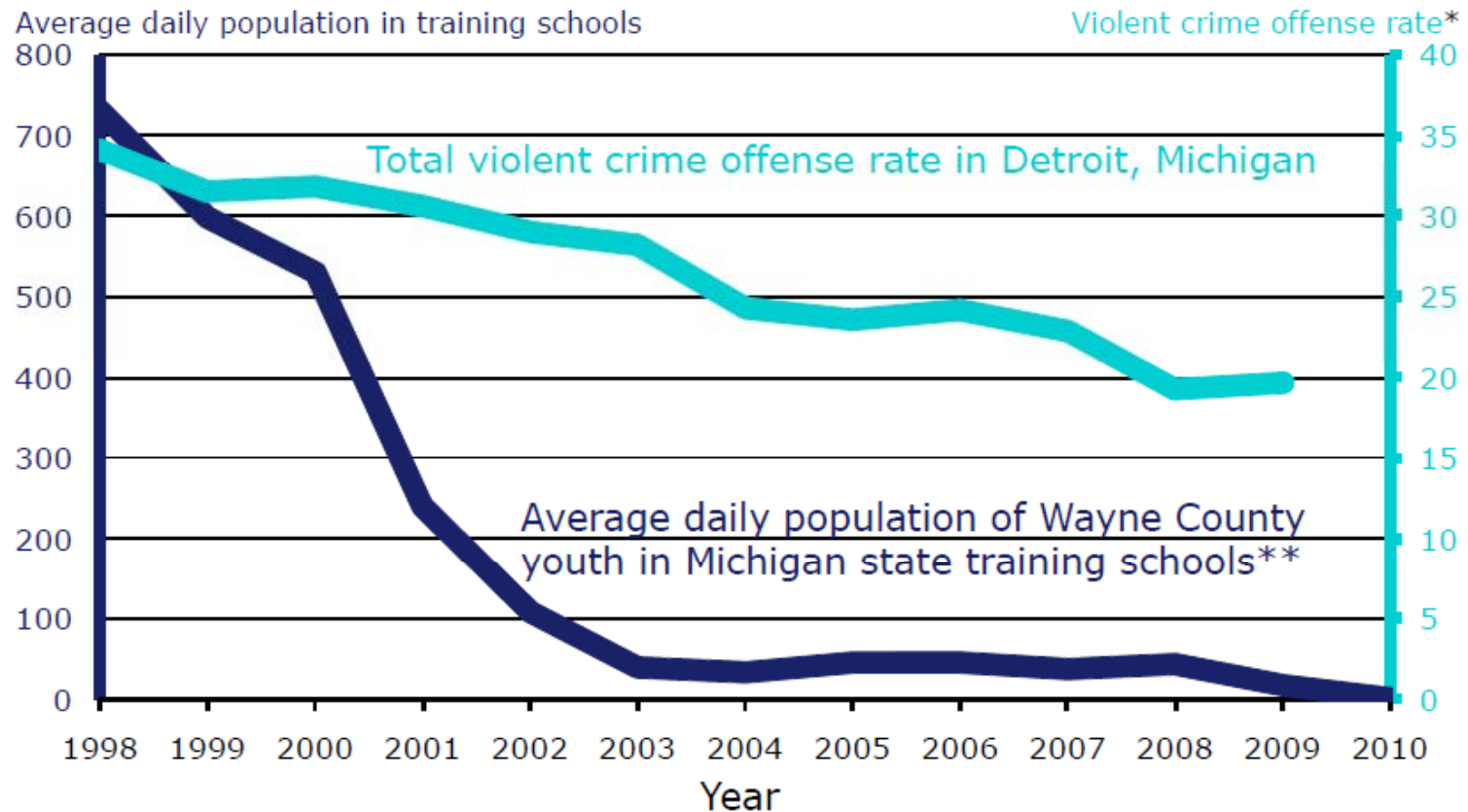- Texas Commitment Reduction Program (2009)

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The realignment initiative in Wayne County virtually eliminated juvenile placements in state training schools

Average daily population in training schools — Violent crime offense rate*

Total violent crime offense rate in Detroit, Michigan

Average daily population of Wayne County youth in Michigan state training schools**
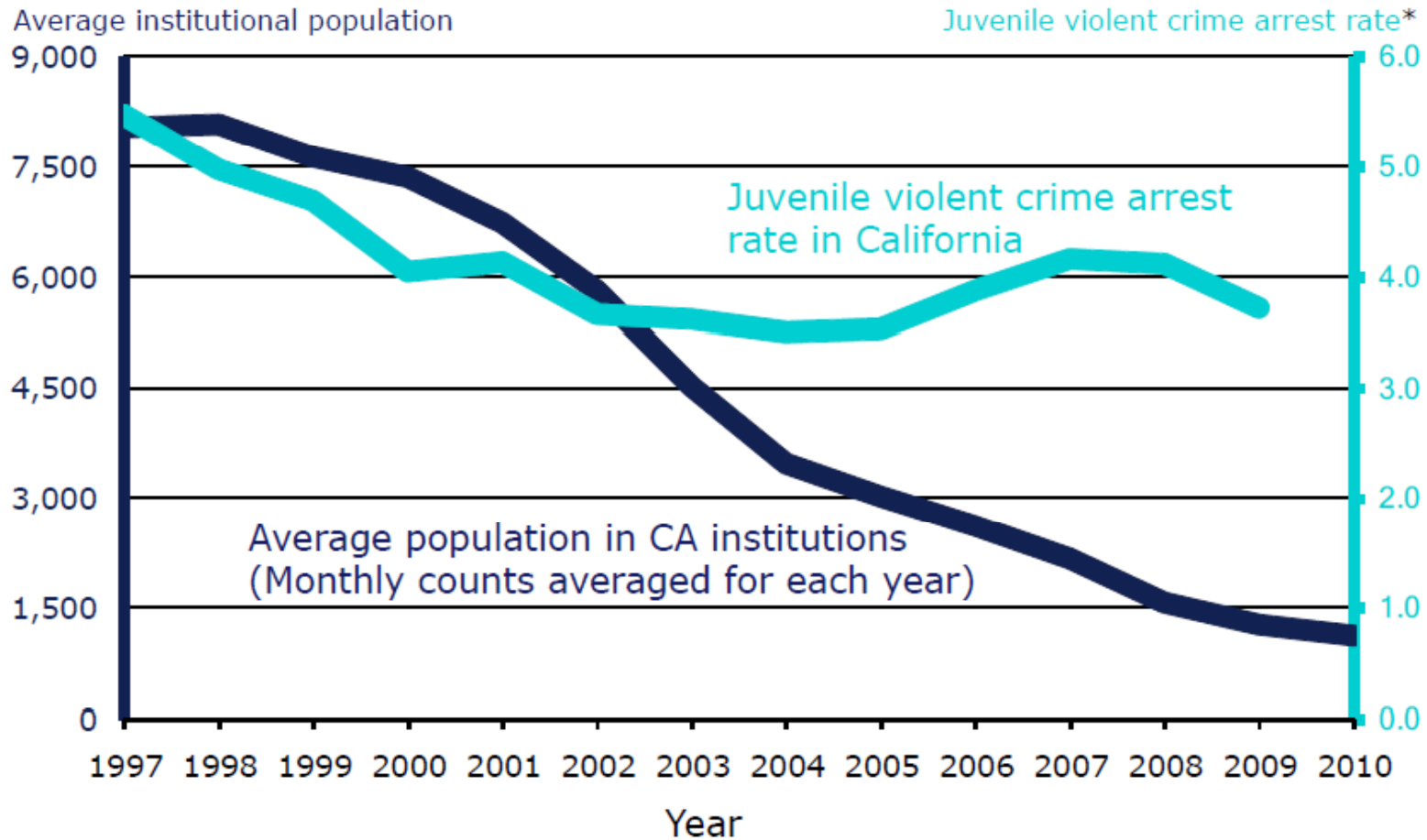
Year

Data sources: Wayne County Children and Family Services (2010a, p. 5) and FBI (UCR, annual, Table 8). Offense data prior to 2005 are adjusted to match subsequent years (see Table 8 notes in FBI reports).

 * Total number of FBI Violent Crime Index offenses reported (all ages) per 1,000 city residents. The FBI does not publish juvenile arrest data for individual cities.
** Average daily populations used because data for the flow of commitments were not available from Wayne County.

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California lowered juvenile commitments more than 80 percent, and the reductions continued even when crime temporarily rebounded

Average institutional population

Juvenile violent crime arrest rate*

Juvenile violent crime arrest rate in California

Average population in CA institutions (Monthly counts averaged for each year)

Year

Data sources: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and FBI (UCR).

* Number of youth (under age 18) arrested for FBI Violent Crime Index offenses per 1,000 youth ages 10-17.

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Policy Issues

Geographic Equity   Large and small jurisdictions have different interests. Regional or hybrid systems may be necessary.

Demand Shift   Restricting access to juvenile incarceration could increase demand for adult incarceration.

"Medicalization"   If funding requires youth "disorders" to be present, justice systems chase the dollars, perhaps increasing stigma and disproportionate minority contact.

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