

Justice Reinvestment
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Following national trends, juvenile arrests and commitments in Hawaii have declined in recent years, falling 28 percent from 2002 to 2011 and 41 percent from 2004 to 2013, respectively. However, at the same time, a growing proportion of juveniles committed for new offenses were adjudicated for misdemeanors (61 percent in 2013, up from 47 percent in 2004), 72 percent of youth committed to HYCF for a new offense were committed for nonviolent crimes, and slightly less than half of all those committed had no prior felony records. And while the expense of a bed in the state's secure facility stood at \$199,320 per year in 2013, three-quarters of all youth leaving the facility were re-adjudicated as delinquents or convicted as adults within three years.

Seeking ways to improve outcomes and protect public safety, the Office of Youth Services worked with Governor Neil Abercrombie, Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald, Senate President Donna Mercado Kim, and House Speaker Joseph Souki to establish the Hawaii Juvenile Justice Working Group in August 2013. The bipartisan, interbranch panel was made up of 20 stakeholders from across the three branches of state government, as well as law enforcement officials, prosecutors, public defenders, and community service providers.

The working group was charged with developing policy recommendations to reduce crime and recidivism by improving outcomes in the juvenile justice system; leveraging and reallocating resources to maximize the effectiveness of Hawaii's correctional dollars and placement options; and ensuring that the state's policies and practices are grounded in data and evidence.

After five months of analysis of the state's commitment and probation policies, data on probation and committed populations, and other key indicators, the working group produced a set of research-based, fiscally sound policy proposals. It recommended limiting placement in Hawaii's secure facility to more serious offenders; reinvesting the resulting savings in effective community-based options; strengthening local supervision; and enhancing accountability in the juvenile justice system. The working group submitted its recommendations to the governor, chief justice, Senate president, and House speaker in a final report in December 2013.

Based on the comprehensive recommendations of the Hawaii Juvenile Justice Working Group, Hawaii enacted House Bill 2490 by votes of 50-0 in the House and 24-0 in the Senate. Governor Abercrombie signed the bill into law July 2, 2014. The law will reduce secure confinement, strengthen community supervision, and focus resources on practices proven to reduce recidivism, and provides an upfront investment of \$1.26 million for mental health and substance abuse treatment, delinquency interventions, and implementation of the reforms.

The policies contained in H.B. 2490 advance priorities in three areas:

- Reduce the use of secure confinement and protect public safety

Limiting space in expensive secure facilities to the most serious juvenile offenders will help Hawaii produce the greatest public safety benefit from the juvenile justice system. In addition, providing certain youth adjudicated for low-level crimes with the opportunity for early interventions will ensure that they are held accountable and that resources are put to their best use.

- Strengthen community supervision and probation practices

Effective community supervision will allow Hawaii to maximize the public safety return on taxpayer investments in juvenile justice. By grounding probation practices in data and research, the state can better hold lower-risk youth accountable while reducing recidivism.

- Sustain effective practices and cultivate stakeholder collaboration

Regular collection and analysis of data and outcomes are necessary to continue improving and maximizing public safety returns. By increasing avenues for collaboration across agencies, H.B. 2490 allows for efficient system management and case planning, enhancing decision-making and resource allocation.