

The Rate of Juvenile Violence in Washington State Declined in 1995, but Remains High

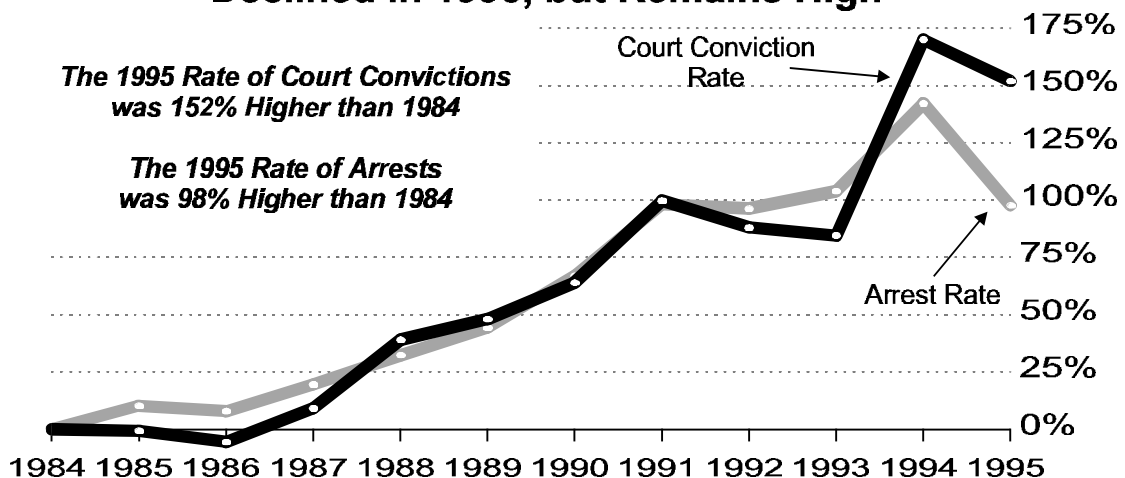
The Washington Legislature in 1994 directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to study juvenile violence and other at-risk behaviors of youth (RCW 70.190.050). The Institute was instructed to analyze trends in these behaviors and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of Washington's efforts to achieve measurable reductions in violence and at-risk behaviors. This research brief is part of the Institute's plan to provide the Legislature and other interested persons with up-to-date findings on these topics.

This research brief provides the latest information on trends in juvenile violence in Washington. There are two primary sources for tracking the rate of violence: the courts and the police. The Office of the Administrator for the Courts tallies all convictions recorded in Washington Superior Courts. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) collects arrest statistics voluntarily submitted by police agencies in the state. Each year some police agencies fail to report arrest data to WASPC. Adjustments must be made to the arrest data in order to make multi-year comparisons meaningful. Table 1 on page 2 describes these adjustments and reports the latest conviction and arrest trends in juvenile violence.

FINDING: The rate of juvenile violence declined in Washington in 1995, but remains high by historical standards. From 1984 to 1995, the rate of juvenile convictions for violent felonies increased 152 percent: from 1.03 convictions per thousand youth under age 18 in 1984 to 2.59 per thousand youth in 1995. The conviction rate in 1995 was down slightly from 1994's peak rate. The 1995 arrest rate was 98 percent higher than 1984's rate, but was also down from the peak in 1994. For further information, contact Steve Aos or Robert Barnoski at (360) 866-6000, ext. 6380.

Figure 1

The Rate of Juvenile Violence in Washington Declined in 1995, but Remains High



Source: See columns (8) and (11) of Table 1 of this Research Brief. Violent offenses include those defined by the FBI: murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Table 1
Trends in Juvenile Violence in Washington State: 1984 to 1995

Calendar Year	Number of 10- to 17-Year-Olds in Washington (1)	Juvenile Violence <u>Arrests</u> By the Police							Juvenile Violence <u>Convictions</u> By the Courts		
		Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests as Reported by WASPC (2)	OFM Adjustment for Previous Misclassification of Aggravated Assaults (3)	Adjusted Violent Crime Arrests (4)	Percentage of State Population Covered by WASPC Juvenile Arrest Data (5)	Adjusted Violent Crime Arrests (6)	Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate, Arrests Per Thousand Juveniles (7)	Change in the Arrest Rate Since 1984 (8)	Court Convictions for Violent Offenses for Persons Under the Age of 18 (9)	Juvenile Violent Crime Conviction Rate, Convictions Per Thousand Juveniles (10)	Change in the Conviction Rate Since 1984 (11)
1984	506,925	1,593	-593	1,000	91.5%	1,092	2.16	0%	522	1.03	0%
1985	504,233	1,704	-612	1,092	91.1%	1,199	2.38	10%	516	1.02	-1%
1986	500,826	1,855	-799	1,056	90.7%	1,164	2.32	8%	487	0.97	-6%
1987	498,628	2,114	-942	1,172	91.3%	1,284	2.57	19%	560	1.12	9%
1988	497,631	2,293	-1,019	1,274	89.8%	1,419	2.85	32%	713	1.43	39%
1989	500,575	2,440	-1,042	1,398	89.7%	1,558	3.11	44%	763	1.52	48%
1990	522,612	2,689	-965	1,724	91.7%	1,880	3.60	67%	883	1.69	64%
1991	545,411	2,878	-786	2,092	89.8%	2,329	4.27	98%	1,122	2.06	100%
1992	564,985	3,003	-788	2,215	92.7%	2,390	4.23	96%	1,094	1.94	88%
1993	588,526	3,252	-982	2,270	87.8%	2,585	4.39	104%	1,118	1.90	84%
1994	607,705	2,822	0	2,822	89.0%	3,172	5.22	142%	1,689	2.78	170%
1995	627,255	2,227	0	2,227	83.3%	2,673	4.26	98%	1,627	2.59	152%

Sources and Notes for Column Numbers

(1) Source: *Intercensal and Postcensal Estimates of Population by Age and Sex, State of Washington: 1980-1995*, Washington State Office of Financial Management, December 1995.

(2) Source: *Crime in Washington State*, Annual Reports, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). The data include arrest data supplied separately by the City of Seattle. Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

The unadjusted arrest numbers from WASPC are also reported in the *Juvenile Justice Report* published by the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

(3) Source: Adjustment made by the Washington State Office of Financial Management via communication to Washington State Institute for Public Policy, November 1995.

From 1984 to 1993, the City of Seattle misclassified some misdemeanor assaults as felony assaults, OFM adjusted the previous Seattle data to correct for this reporting error.

(4) Note: Column (4) = Column (2) + Column (3).

(5) Washington State Institute for Public Policy analysis of annual WASPC data on law enforcement agencies that did not report juvenile arrest information to WASPC.

For example, the Institute estimates that in 1995 83.3 percent of Washington's population was served by police agencies that reported juvenile arrest data to WASPC that year.

(6) Column (6) = Column (4) / Column (5).

(7) Column (7) = (Column (6) / Column (1)) / 1,000.

(9) Washington State Institute for Public Policy analysis of data from the Office of the Administrator for the Courts and the Washington State Department of Corrections.

The conviction data include all juveniles under the age of 18 at the date of the offense, who were subsequently convicted in either juvenile or adult court.

Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

(10) Column (10) = (Column (9) / Column (1)) / 1,000.