



# William Lassiter

## Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice

...Serving public safety and reducing delinquency by providing the right service, at the right time, in the right place



# Juvenile Justice Mission & Vision

**Mission:** To reduce and prevent juvenile delinquency by effectively intervening, educating, and treating youth in order to strengthen families and increase public safety.

**Vision:** A seamless, comprehensive juvenile justice system that provides the most effective services to youth and their families at the right time, in the most appropriate settings.

# Juvenile Justice History



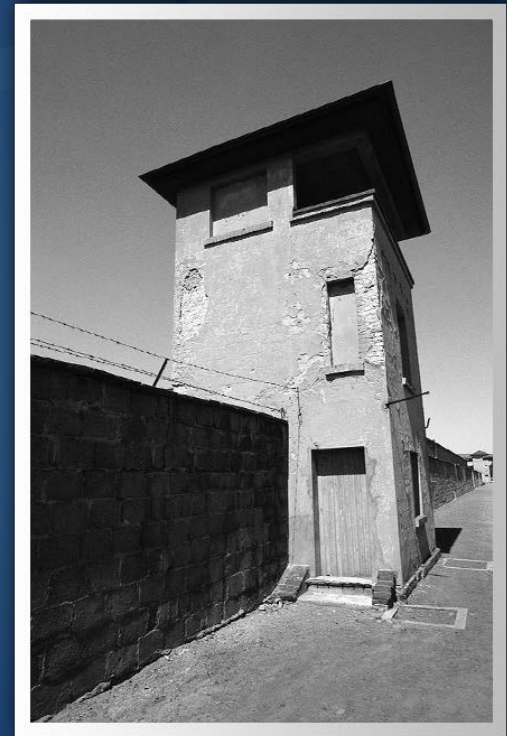
# History: Eighteenth Century

- Children treated much like adults
- Concerns about housing children with older serious offenders
- Governors often pardoned young offenders



# History: Nineteenth Century

- Houses of refuge
- Apprenticeship
- Attempts to “save” children through rehabilitation and discipline
- Creation of larger industrial and reform schools
- Continued use of adult prisons



# History: Twentieth Century

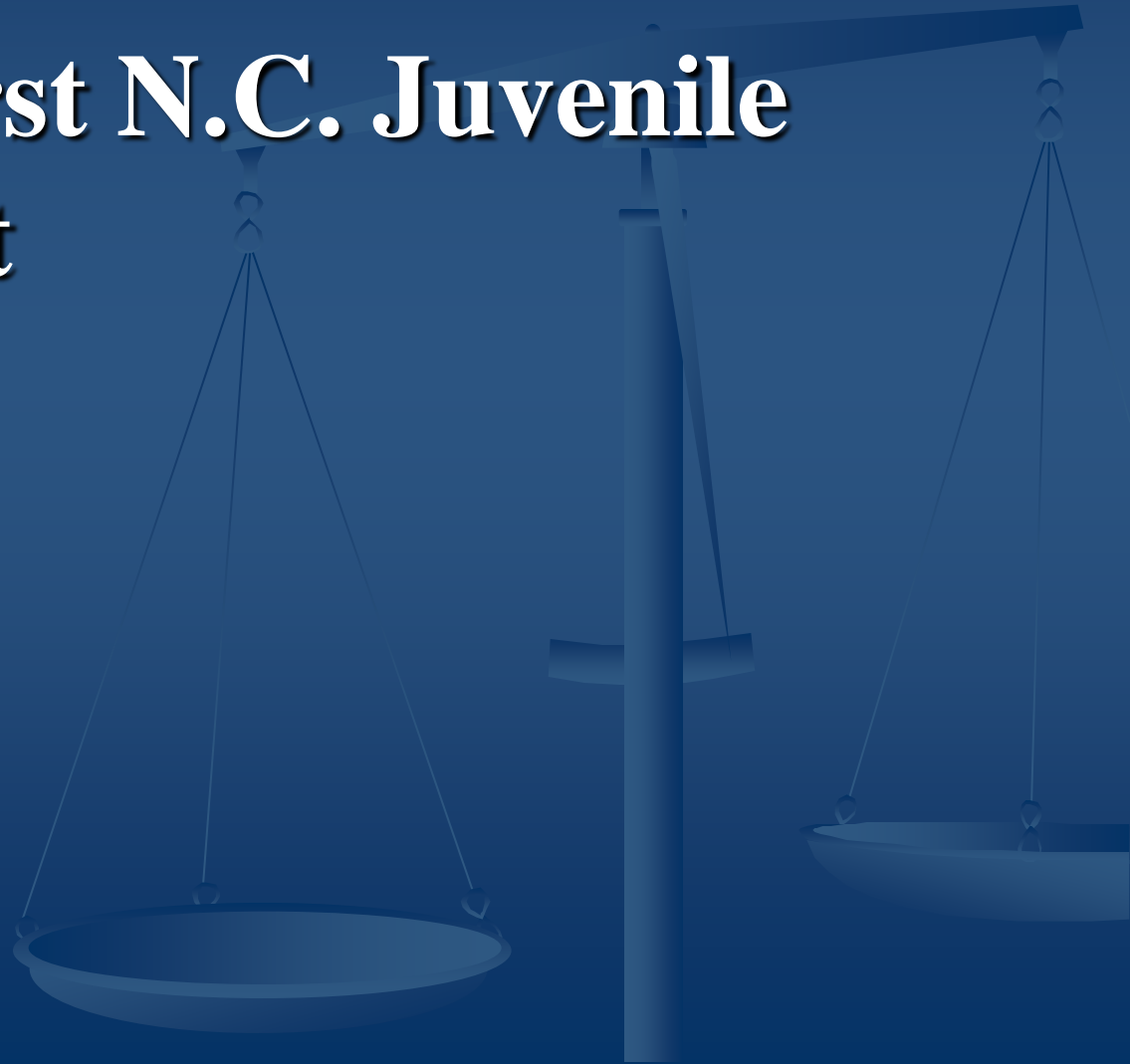
In North Carolina, concerns resulted in 1907 legislation authorizing Stonewall Jackson Manual Training and Industrial School

Funded by state legislature in 1909



# History: Twentieth Century: Continued

- **1919: First N.C. Juvenile Court Act**



# History: Twentieth Century: Continued

- **1976 -1977: Three training schools transferred to NC DOC**
- **1978: Community based alternatives to training school implemented with appropriation of one million dollars**
- **1980: New juvenile code became effective**

**“Willie M” class action lawsuit settled  
Juveniles removed from adult jails**

**State operated detention centers in  
Cumberland, Gaston, Wilkes & Pitt  
counties.**



# History: Twentieth Century: Continued

- **1997: Governor named Commission on Juvenile Crime and Justice to review juvenile code**

**Commission's recommendations become Juvenile Justice Reform Act passed by N.C. General Assembly**

**Office of Juvenile Justice created, combining Division of Youth Services from DHHS and Juvenile Services Division from AOC.**

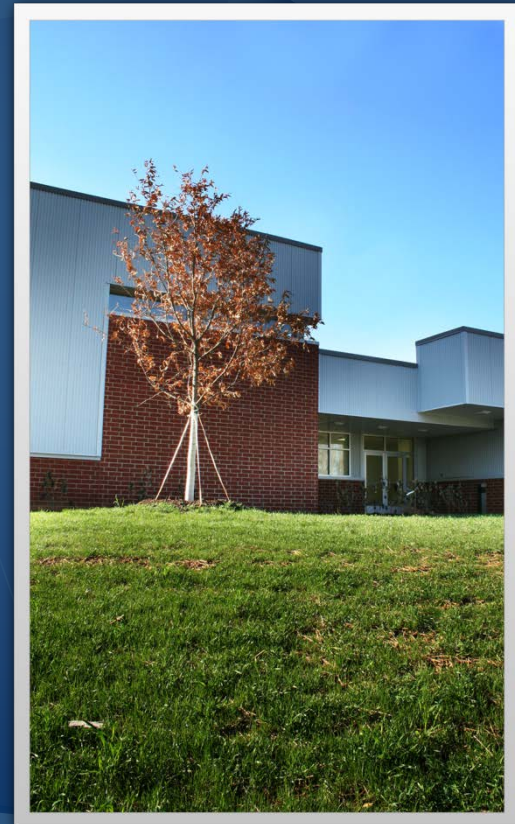
# History: Twenty-First Century

- 2000: General Assembly creates cabinet level Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. George Sweat is first Secretary.
- 2003: Performance audit by State auditor's office reveals need for replacement facilities due to outdated, unsafe condition of current facilities.

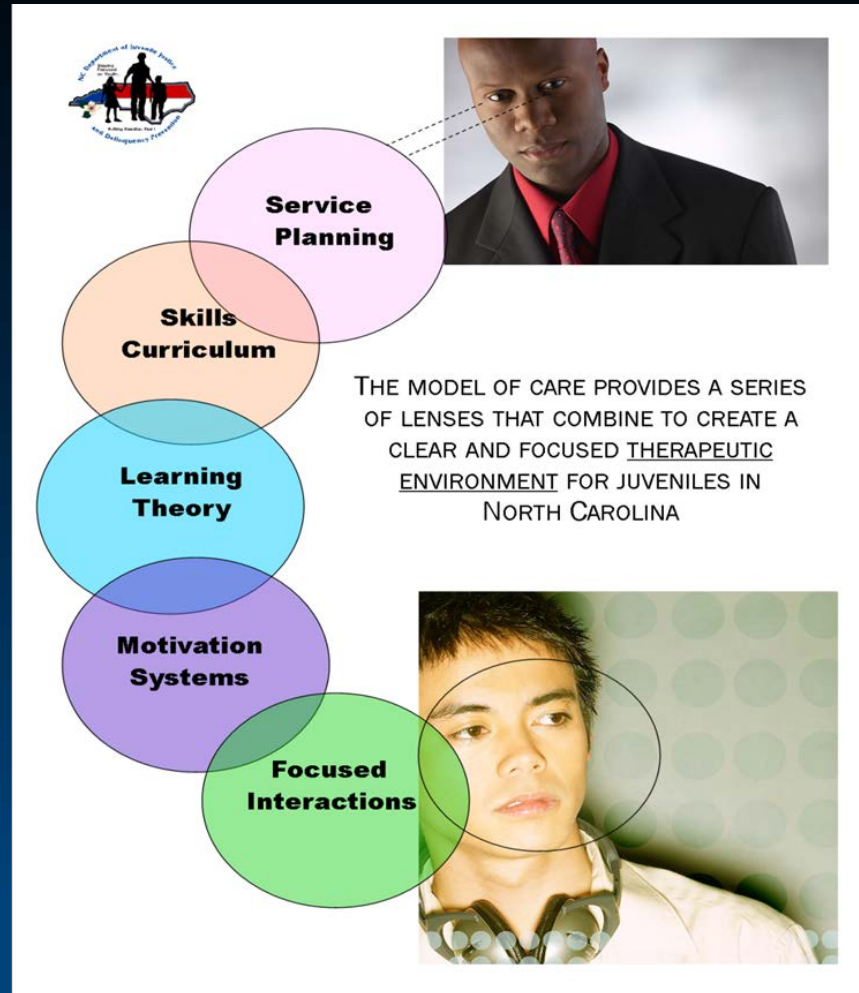
Therapeutic Environment Training initiated at YDCs.

# History: Twenty-First Century: Continued

- 2003: Construction of five new facilities approved by General Assembly.
- 2006: Four replacement facilities conduct groundbreaking ceremonies.
- 2008: Four replacement facilities open,



# Model of Care



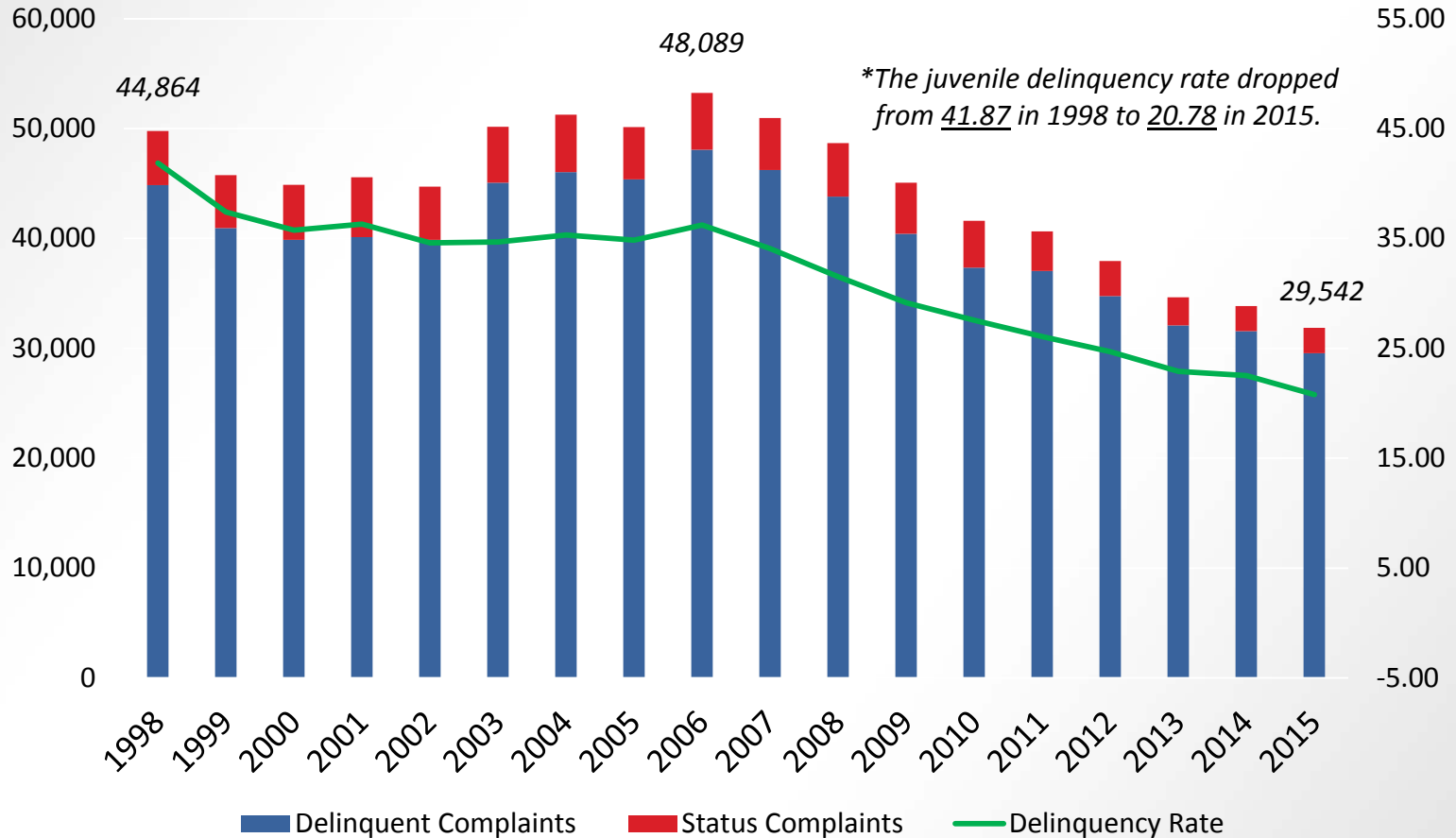
# Model of Care

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Jackson Project</i>	<i>Standard Care</i>
Serious Misbehavior****	3.25	4.0
Behavior Alerts***	5.75	40.3
Time in Disciplinary Isolation/Segregation (total hrs/mo.)**	3.84	300.04
Number of Visits with Family*	28.25	20.67
Family Attendance at Treatment Activities**	11.83	5.58
Use of Force***	0.17	3.42

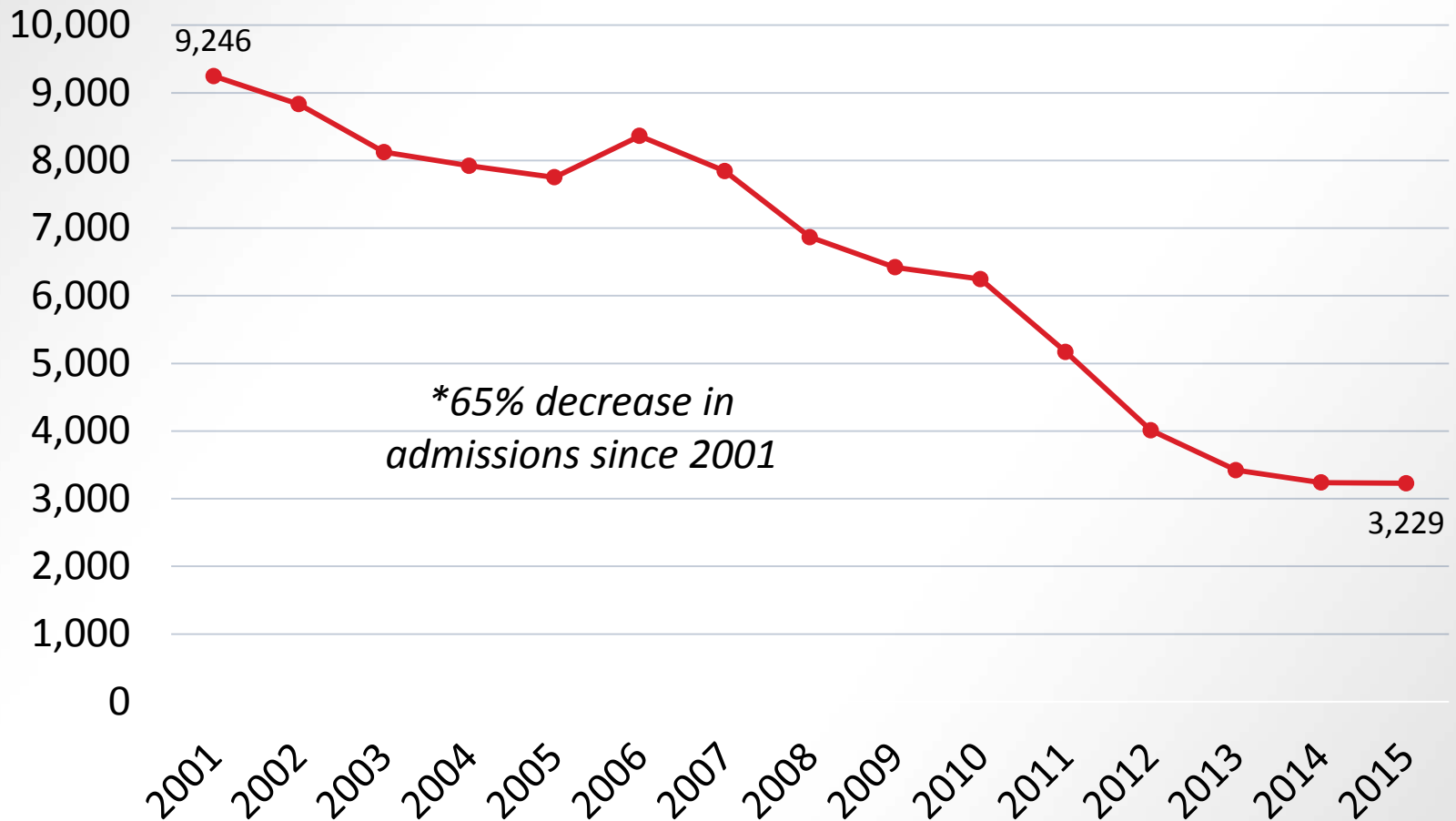
\*No statistically significant difference    \*\* p < .001    \*\*\*p < .01    \*\*\*\* p < .05

<b>Recidivism at 3 years</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>52%</b>
------------------------------	------------	------------

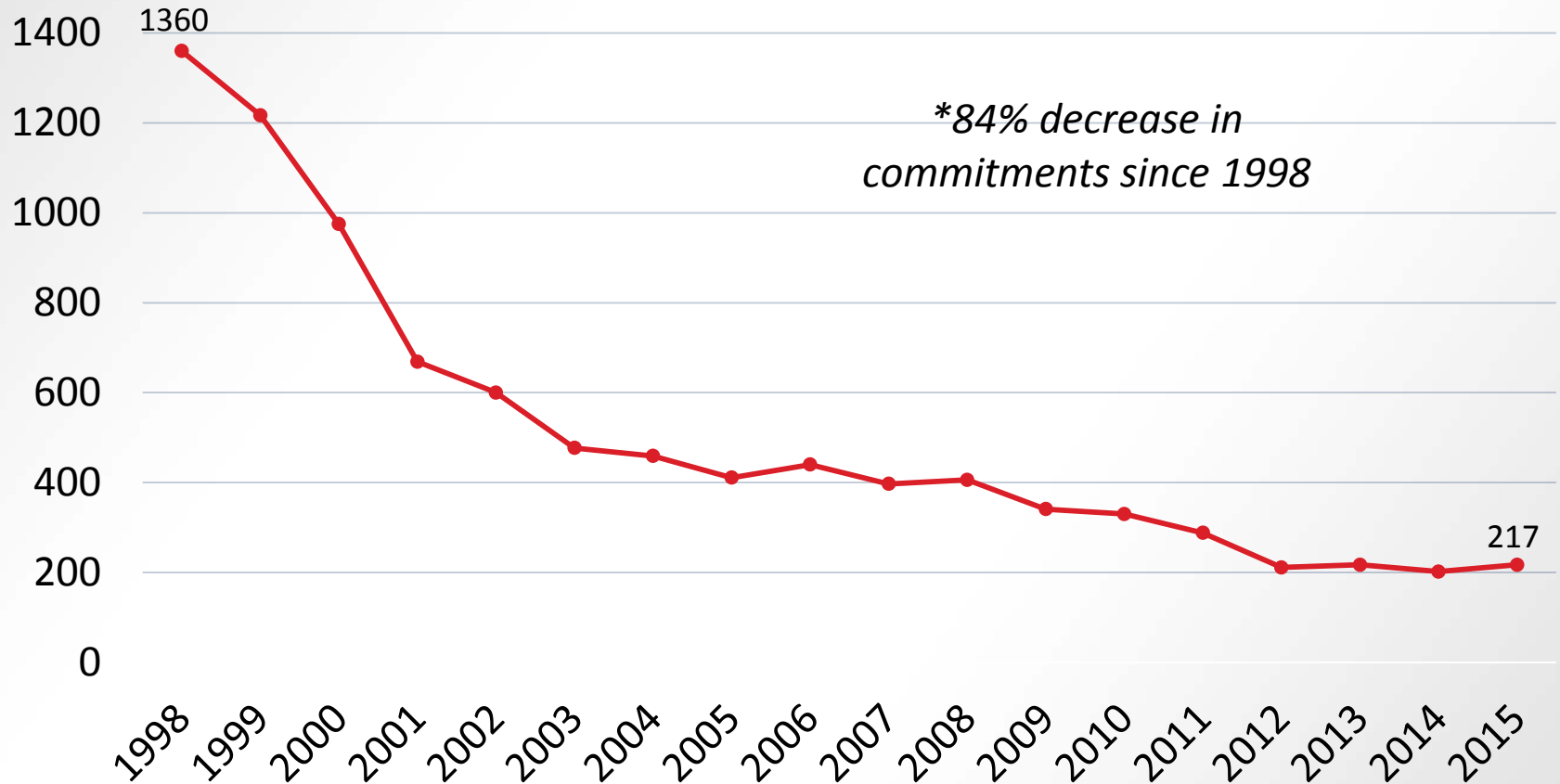
# History of Juvenile Complaints in NC (1998-2015)



# Trends in Juvenile Detention Center Admissions (2001-2015)

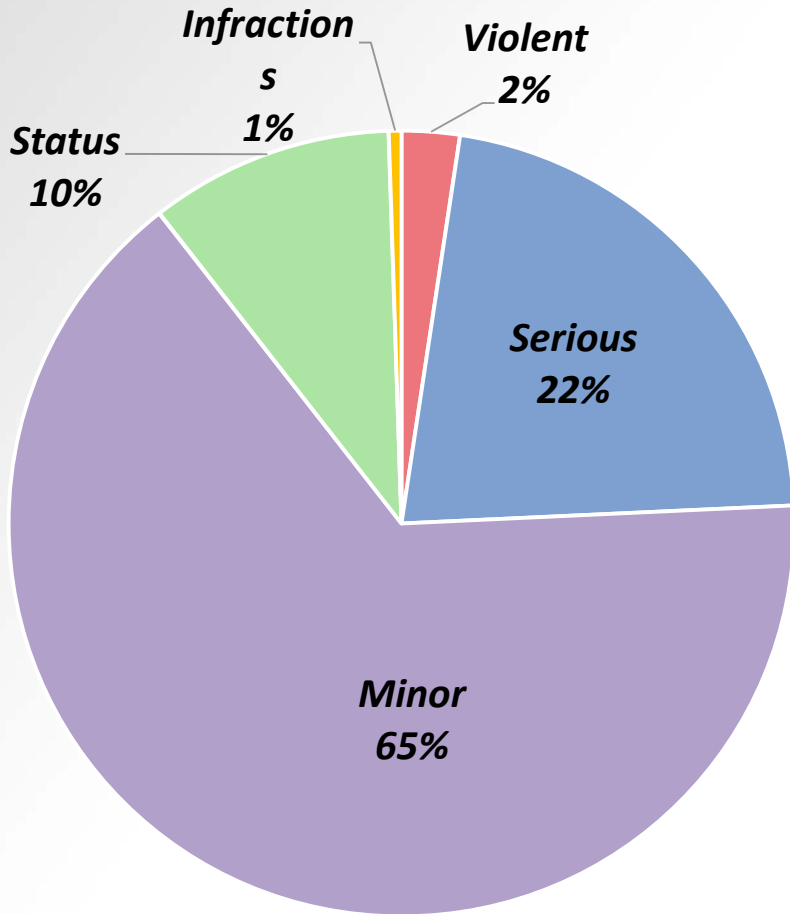


# Trends in Youth Development Center Commitments (1998-2015)

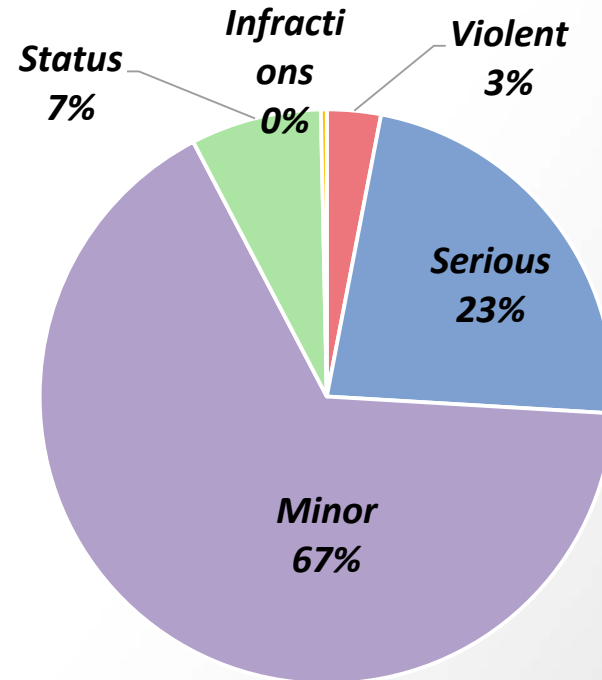




# Charged Class: Violent, Serious, Minor, Status Offenses and Infractions

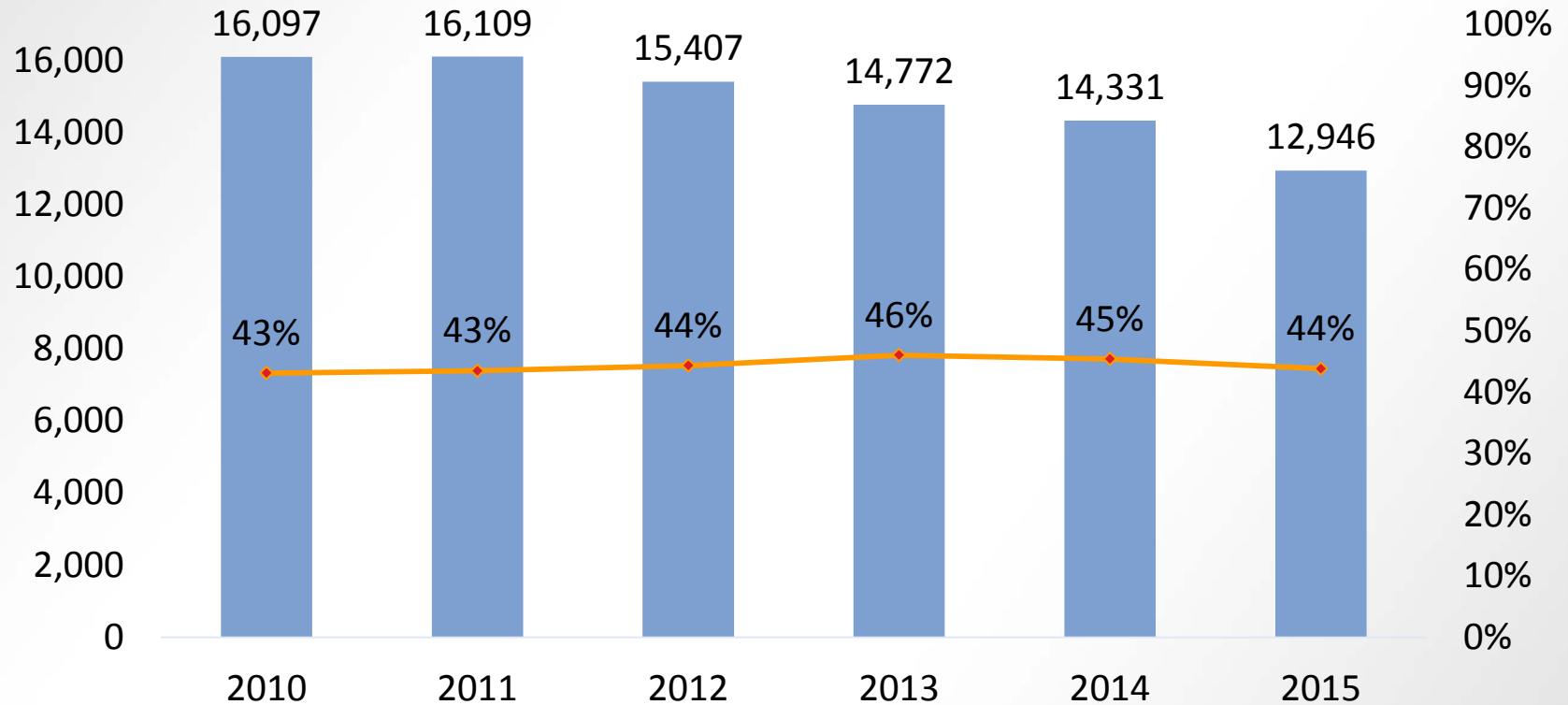


(2002-2015)  
n=599,829



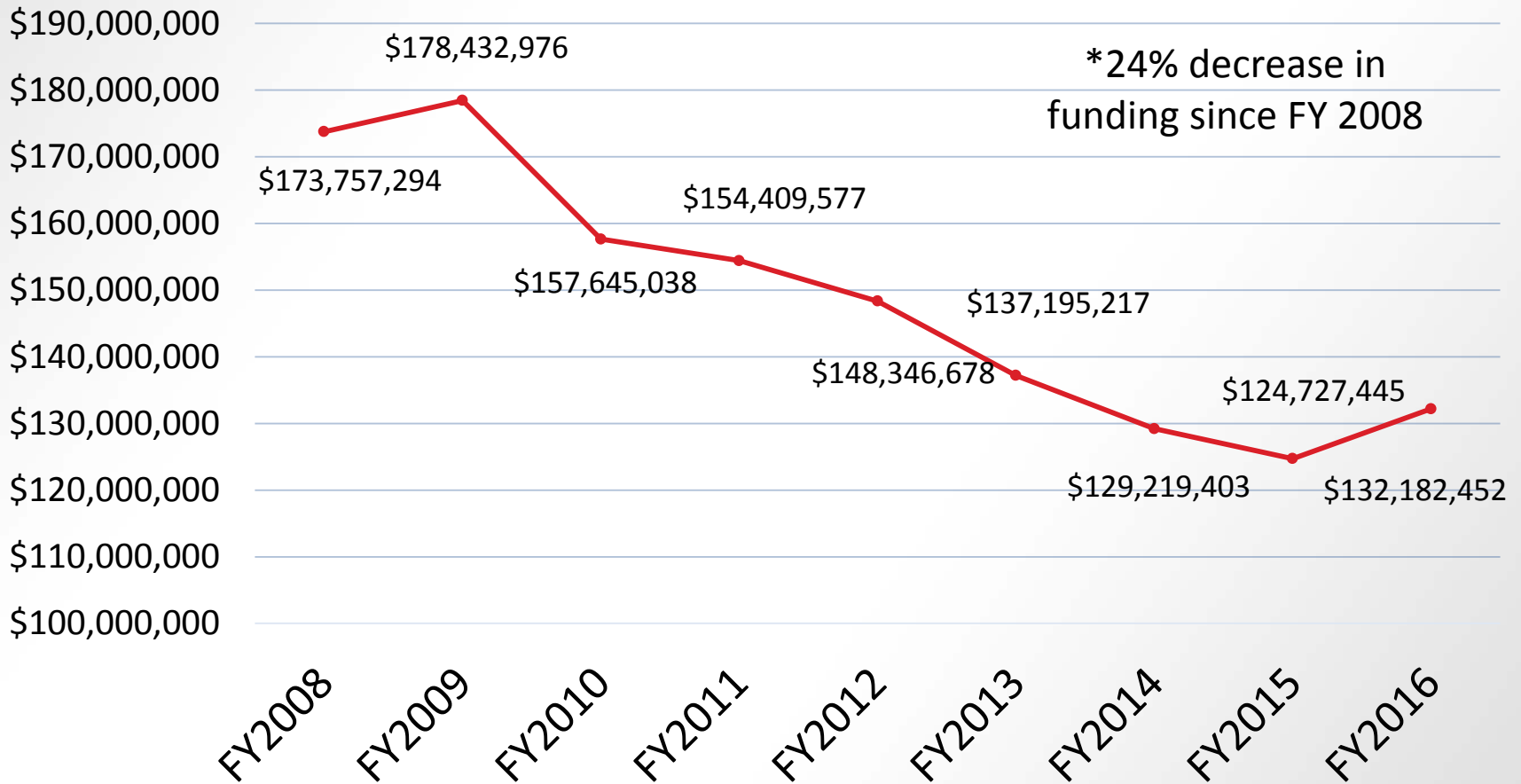
(2015)  
n=39,014

# Percentage of School-Based Complaints

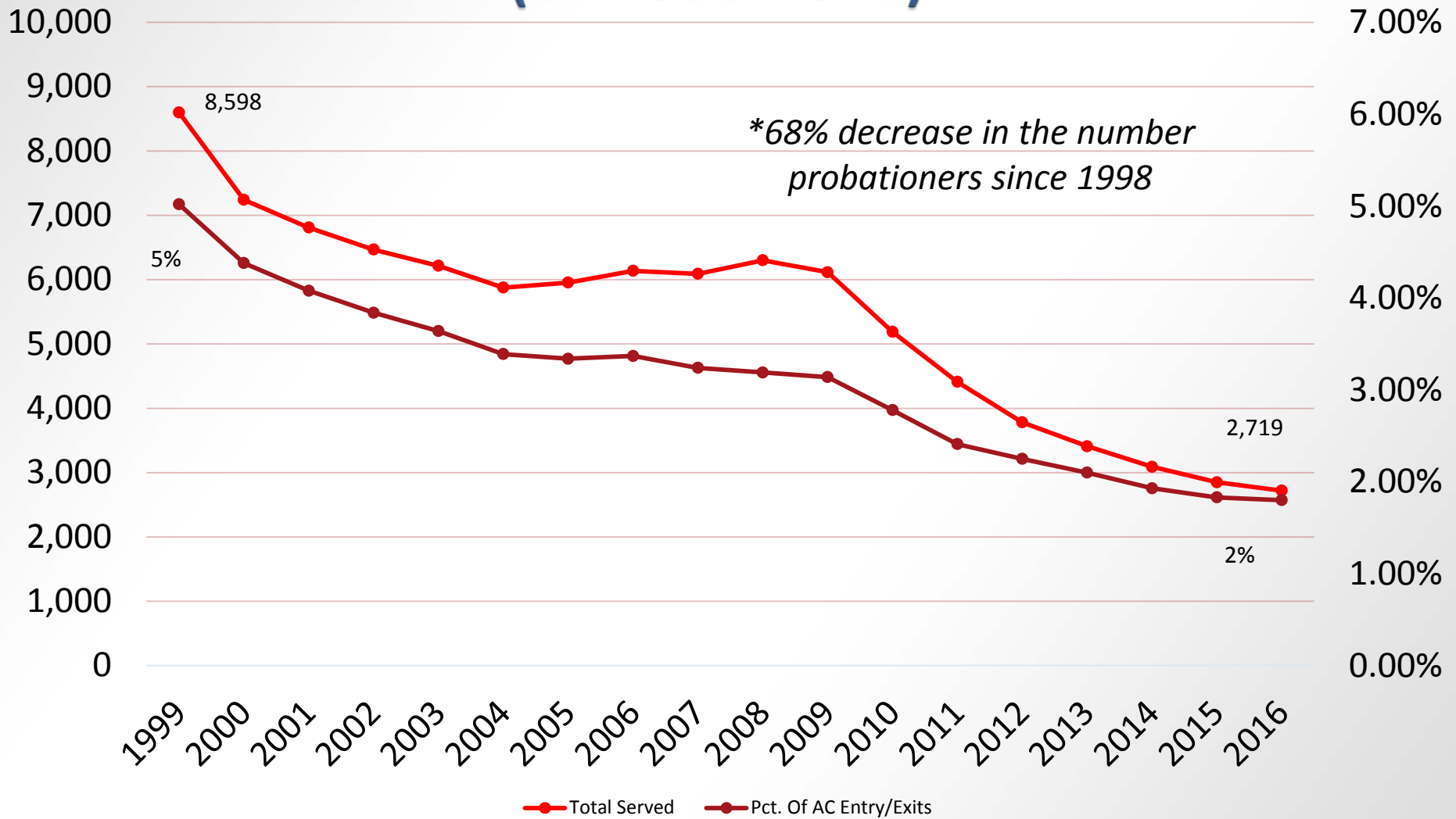


■ Number of School-Based Complaints    —◆— Percentage of School-Based Complaints

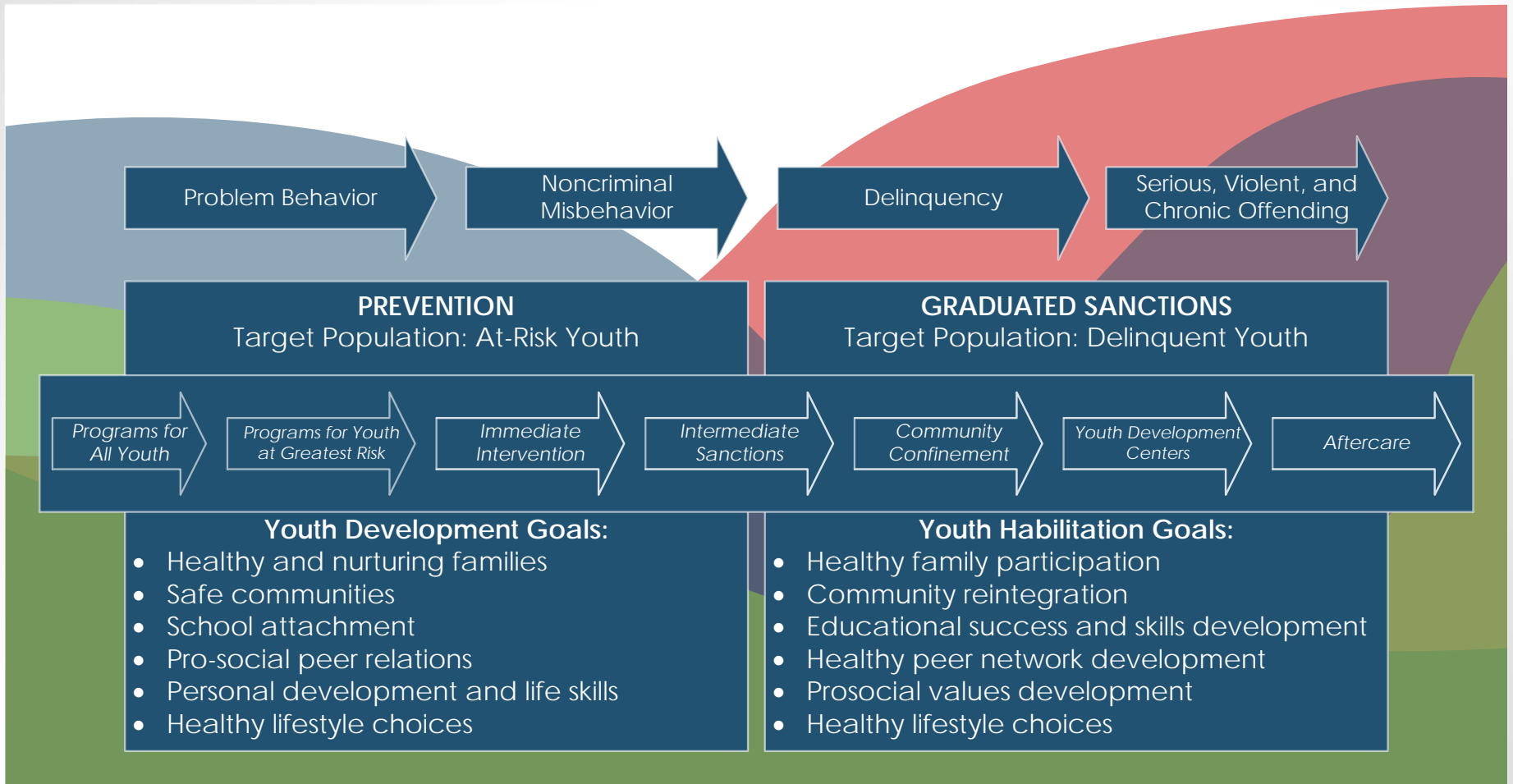
# Appropriated Funds (FY 2008-2016)



# 16 and 17 Year Olds on Adult Supervision (CY 1999-2016)



# Comprehensive Strategy

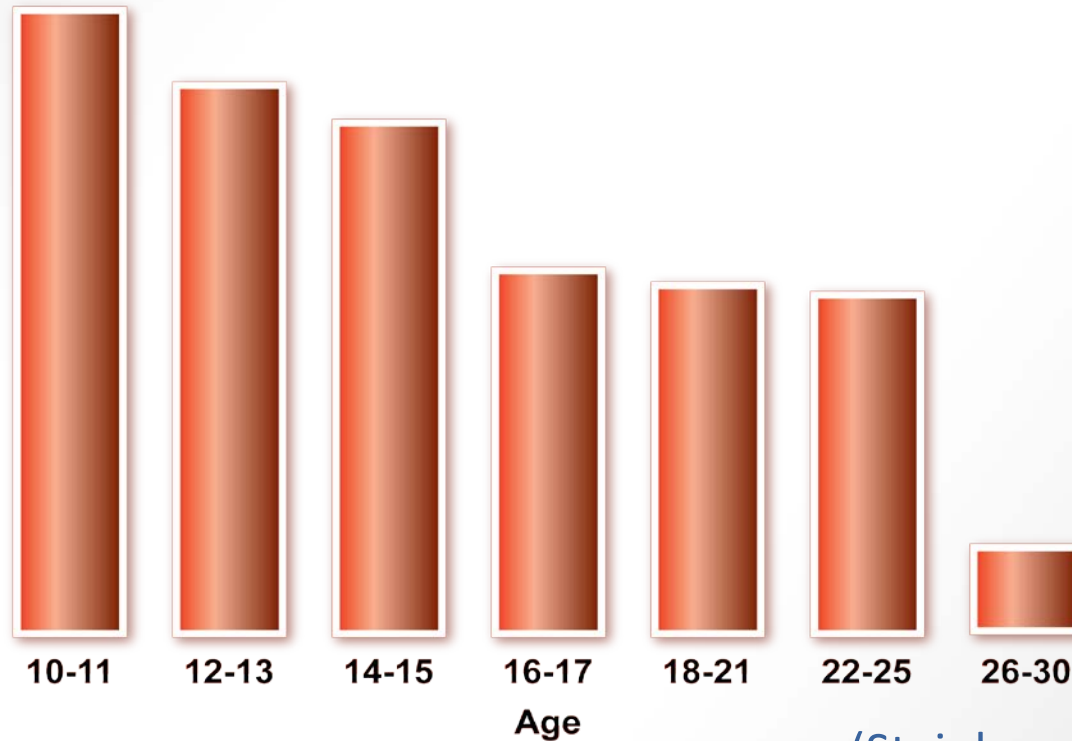




# Raise the Juvenile Age Update: Recommendation from the Youth Subcommittee

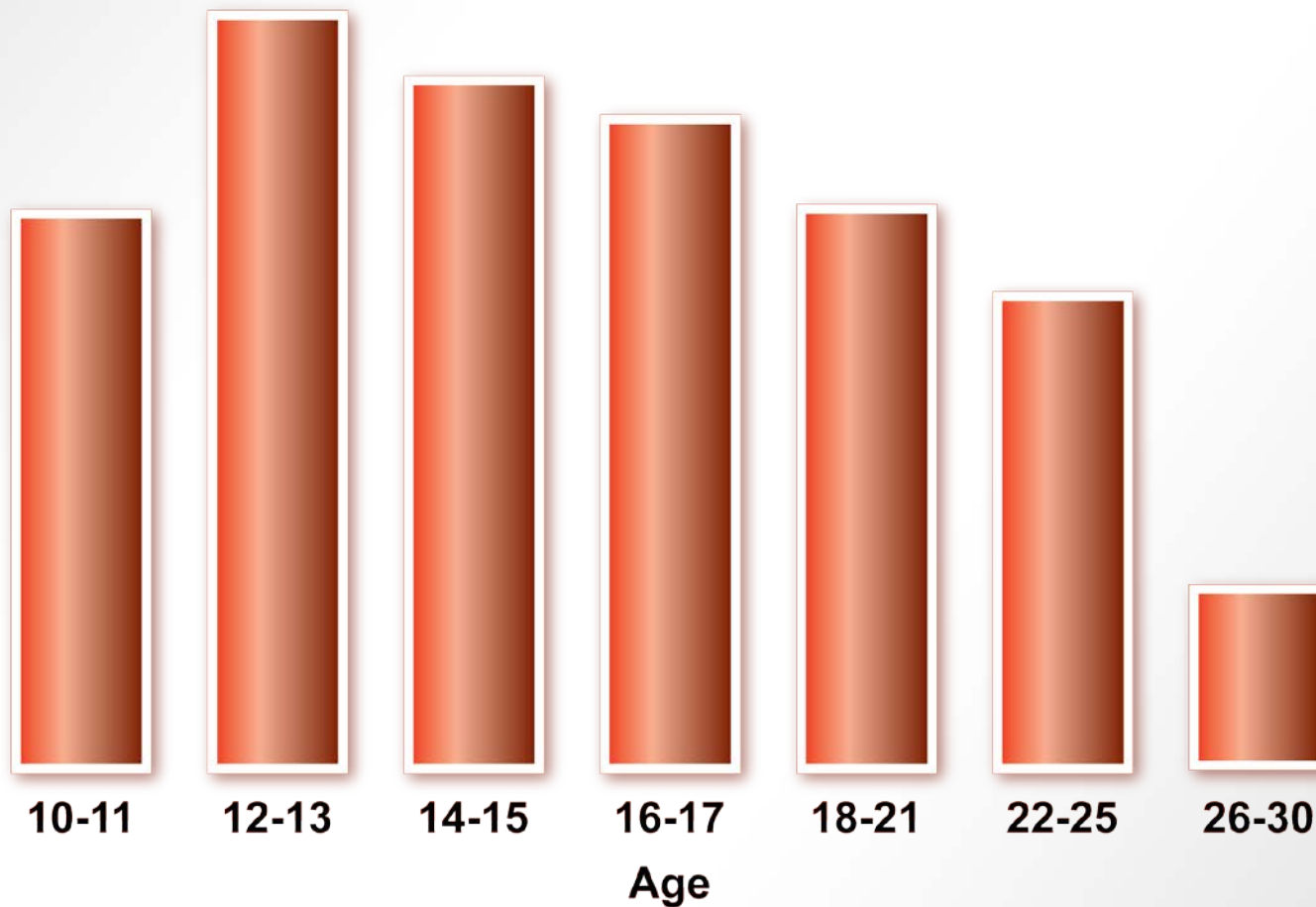
William Lassiter, Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice  
Department of Public Safety  
Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

# Impulsivity Declines with Age



(Steinberg, et.al., 2008)

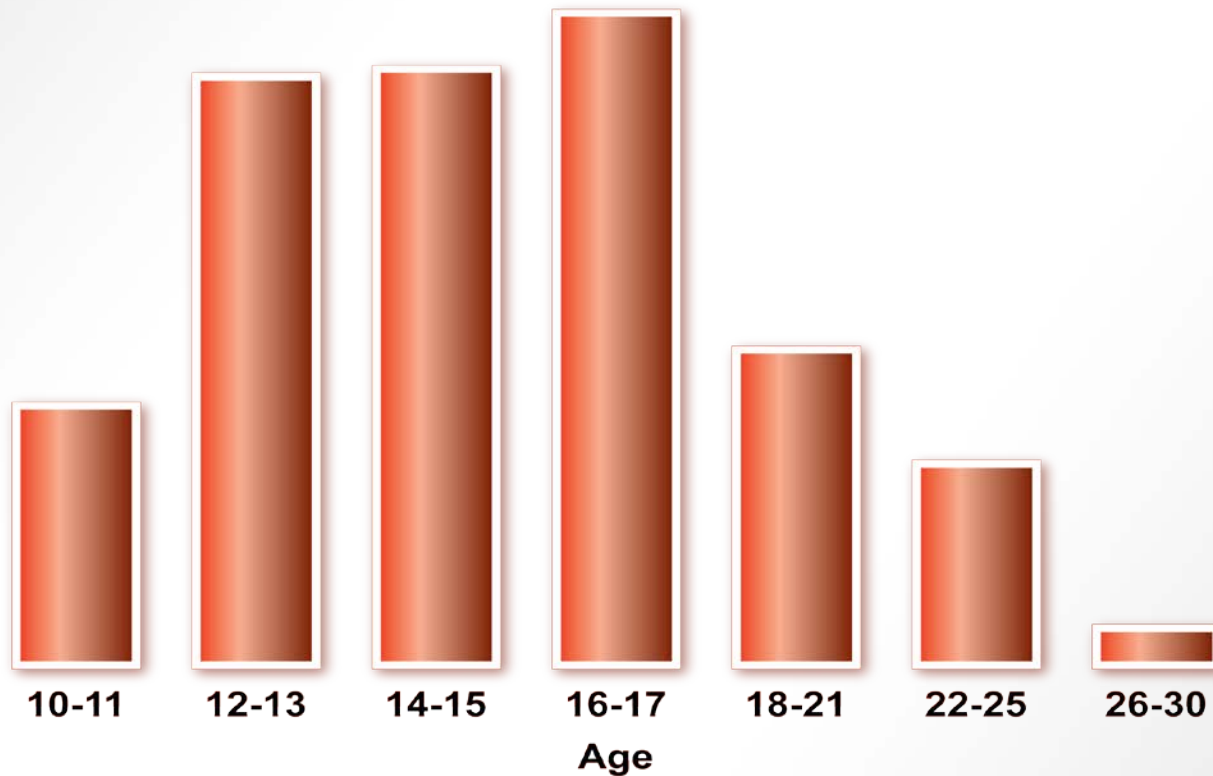
# Sensation-seeking Declines with Age



(Steinberg, et al., 2008)

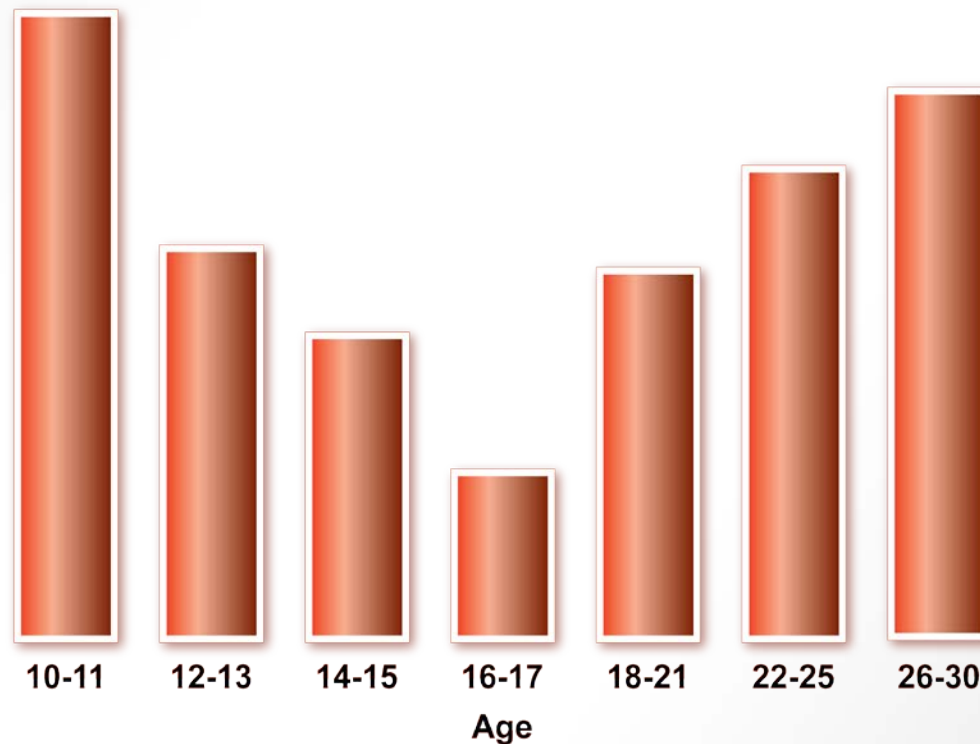


# Preferences for Risk Peaks in Mid-Adolescence



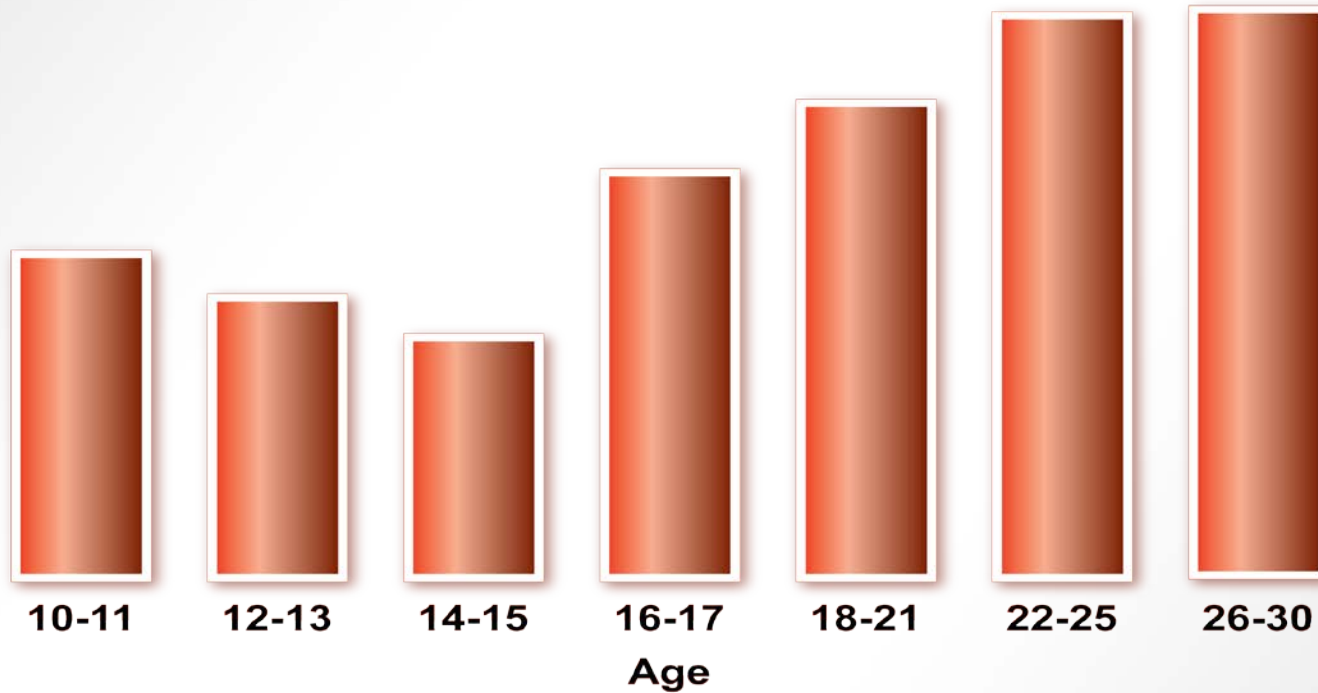
(Steinberg, et al., 2009)

# Risk Perception Declines and then Increases After Mid-Adolescence



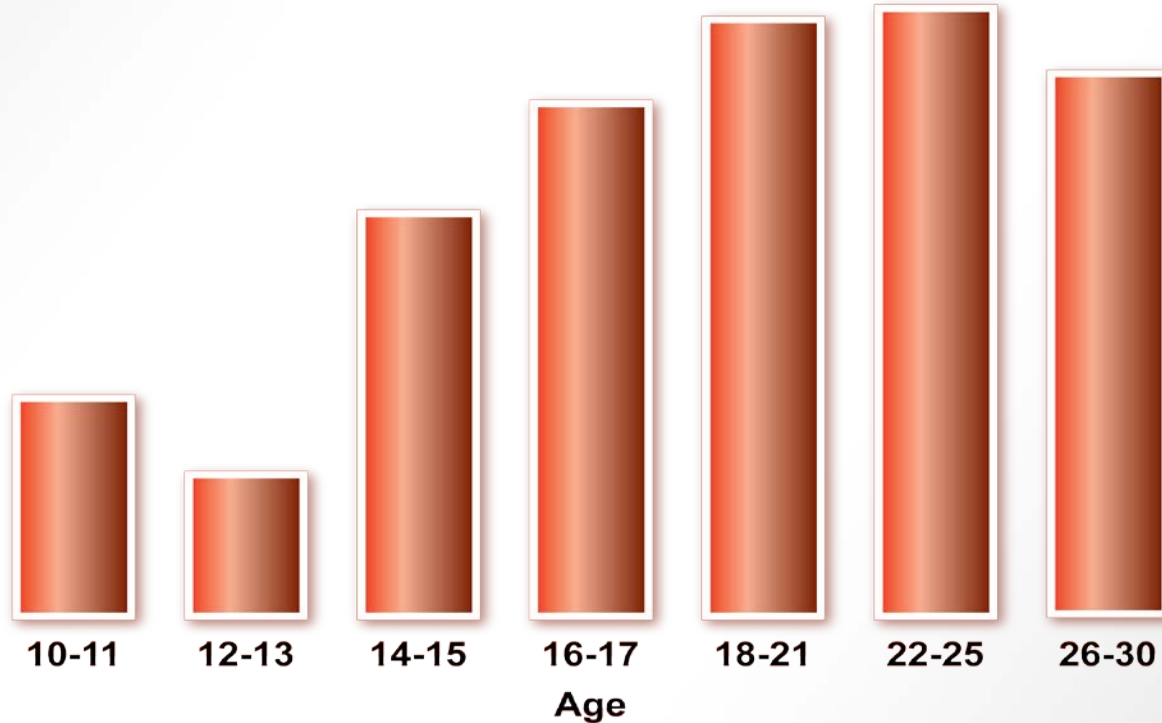
(Steinberg, et al., 2009)

# Future Orientation Increases with Age



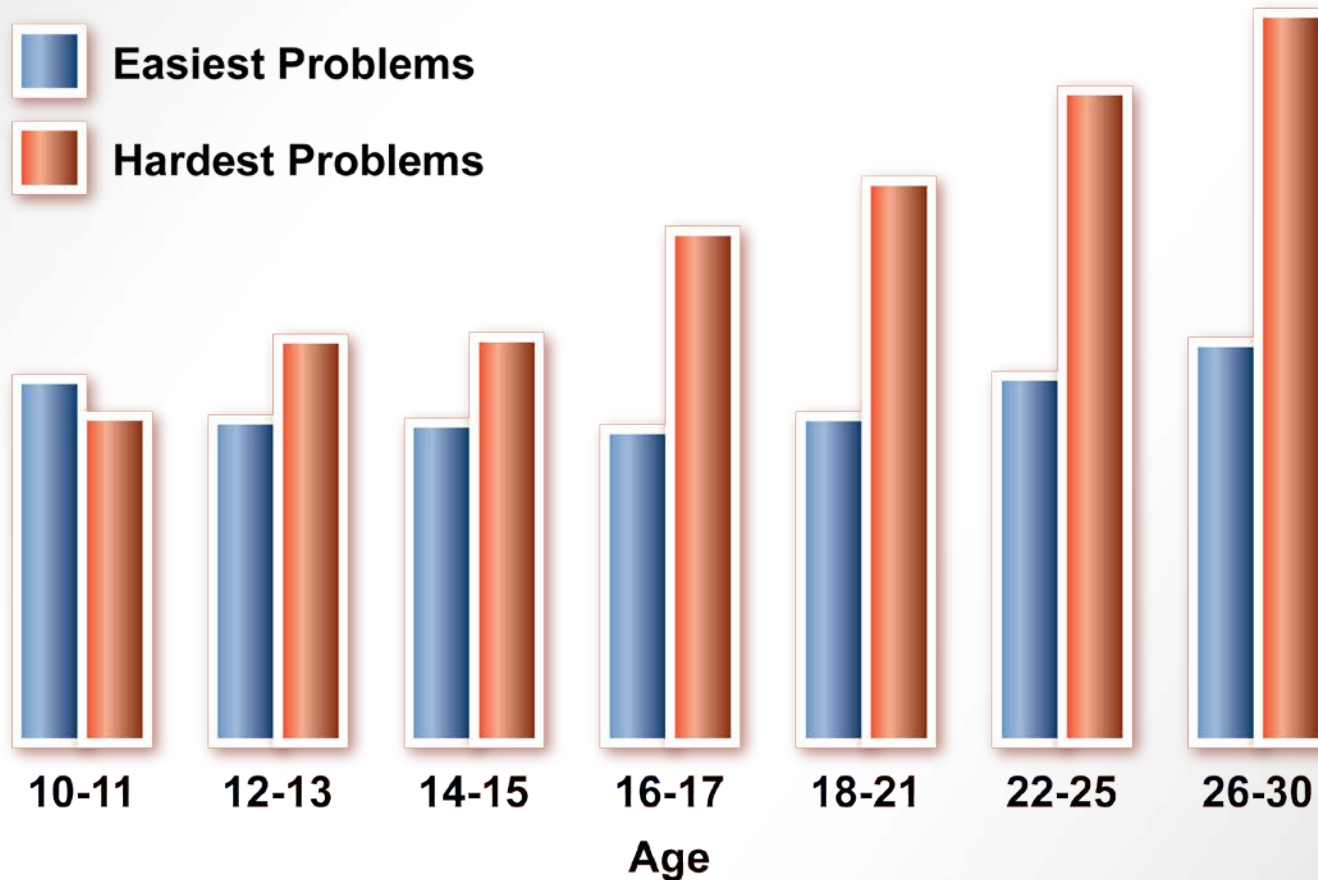
(Steinberg, et al., 2009)

# Older Individuals Are More Willing to Delay Gratification



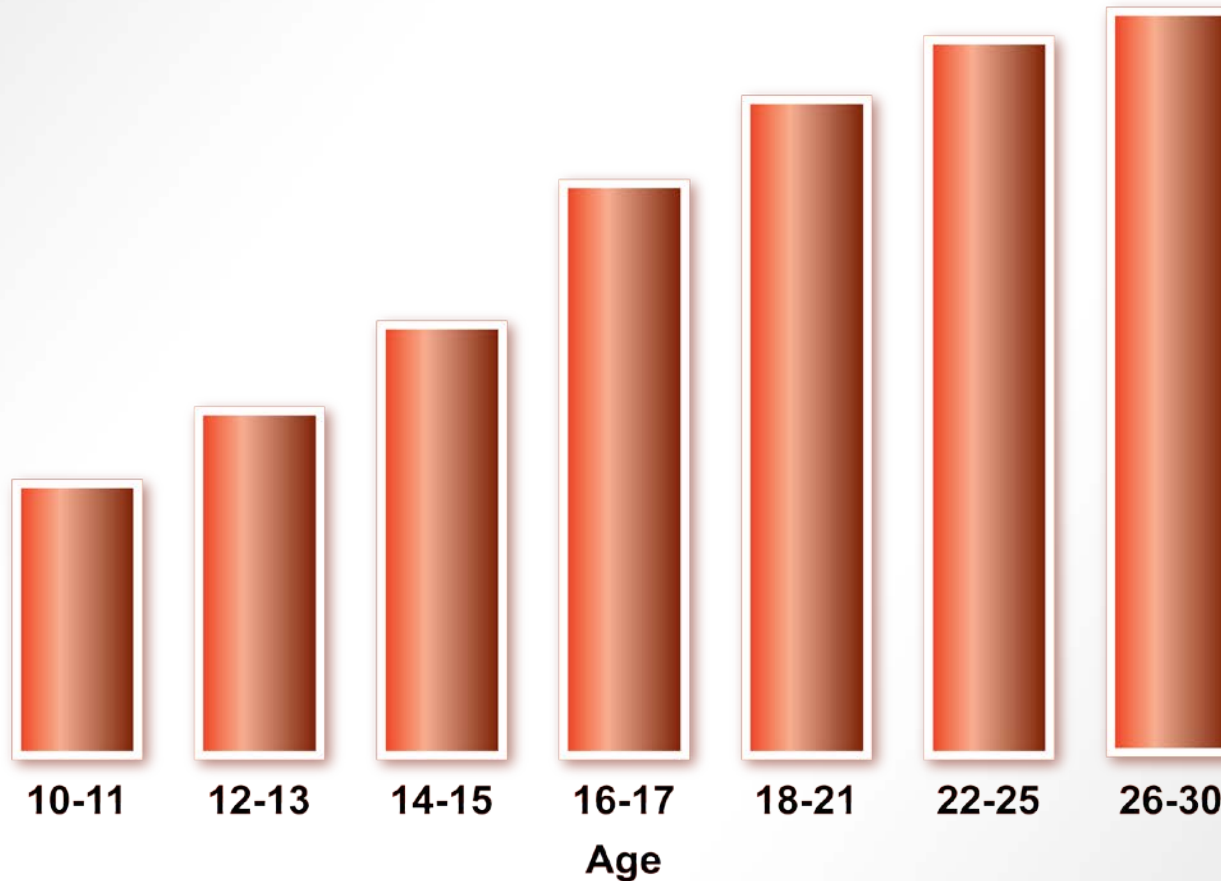
(Steinberg, et al., 2009)

# With Age, Longer Time Spent Thinking Before Acting

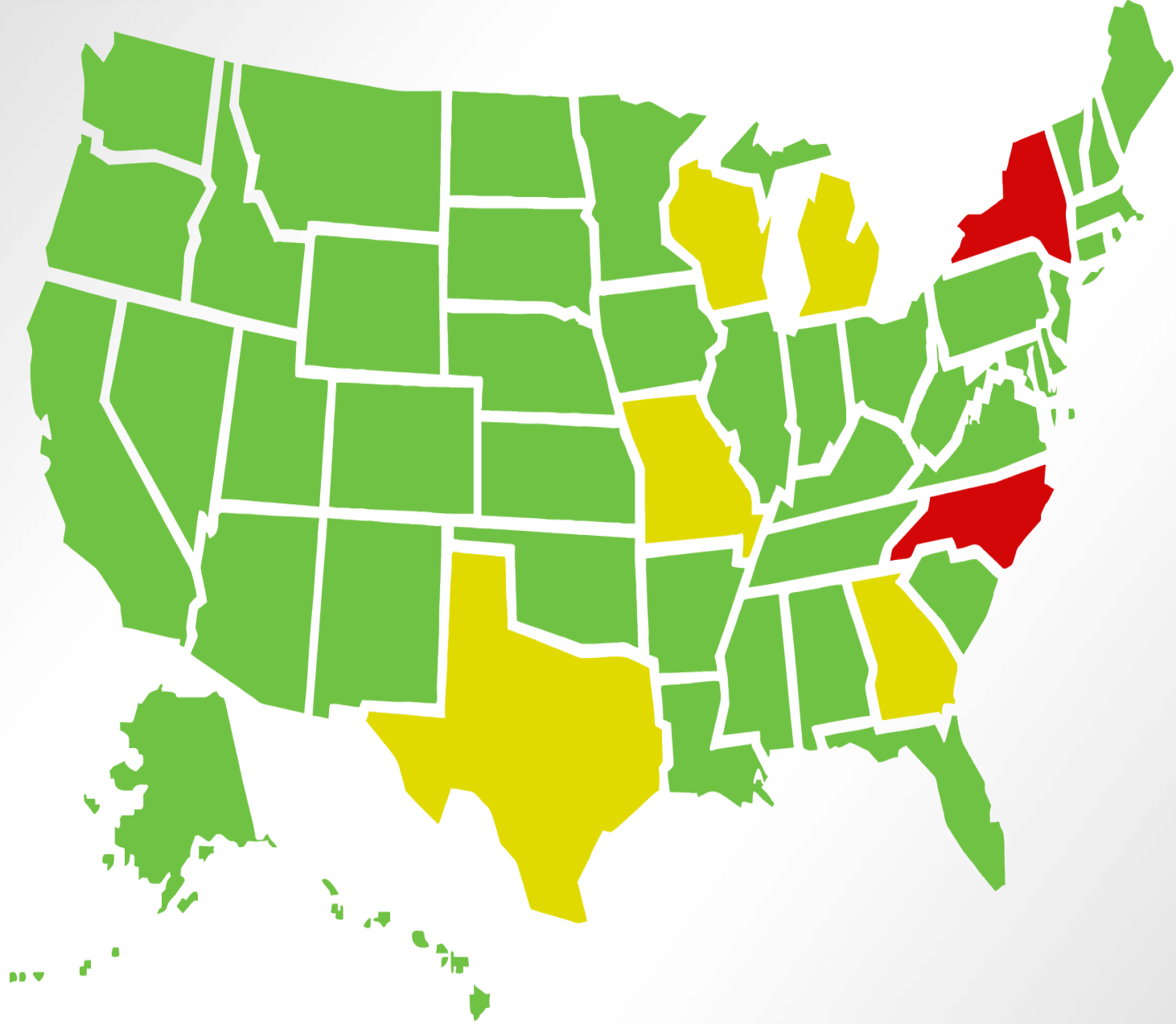


(Steinberg & Monahan, 2007)

# With Age, Individuals Become More Resistant to Peer Influence



(Steinberg & Monahan, 2007)



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

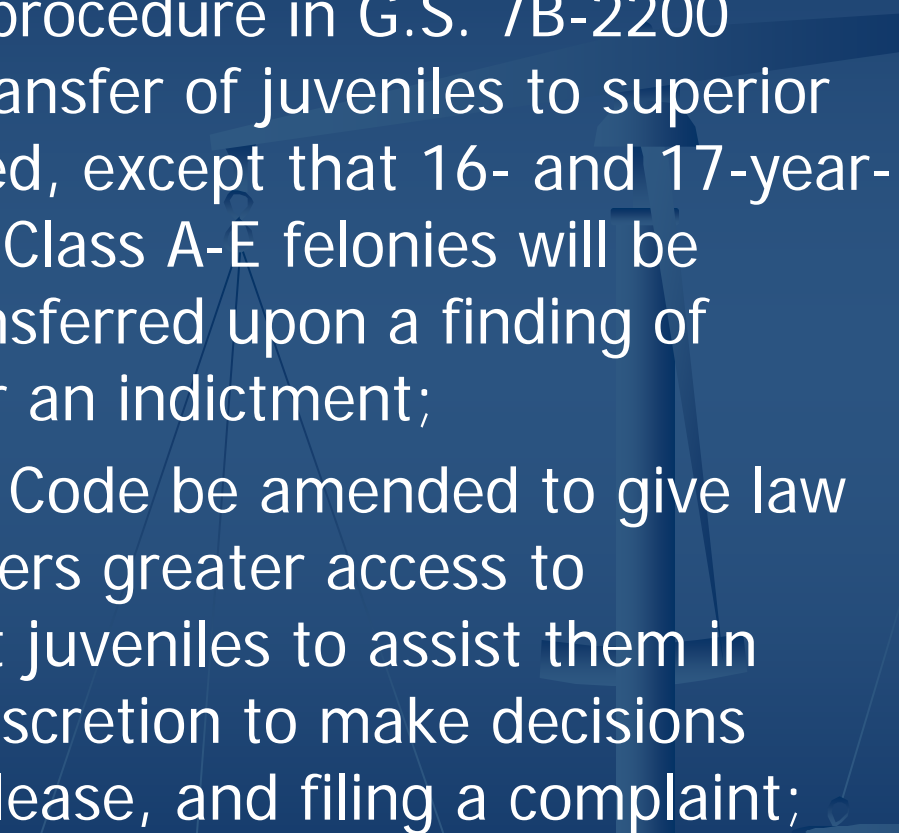
Juvenile Court Jurisdiction  
Age 6 – Age 15

Adult Criminal Justice System  
Age 16+

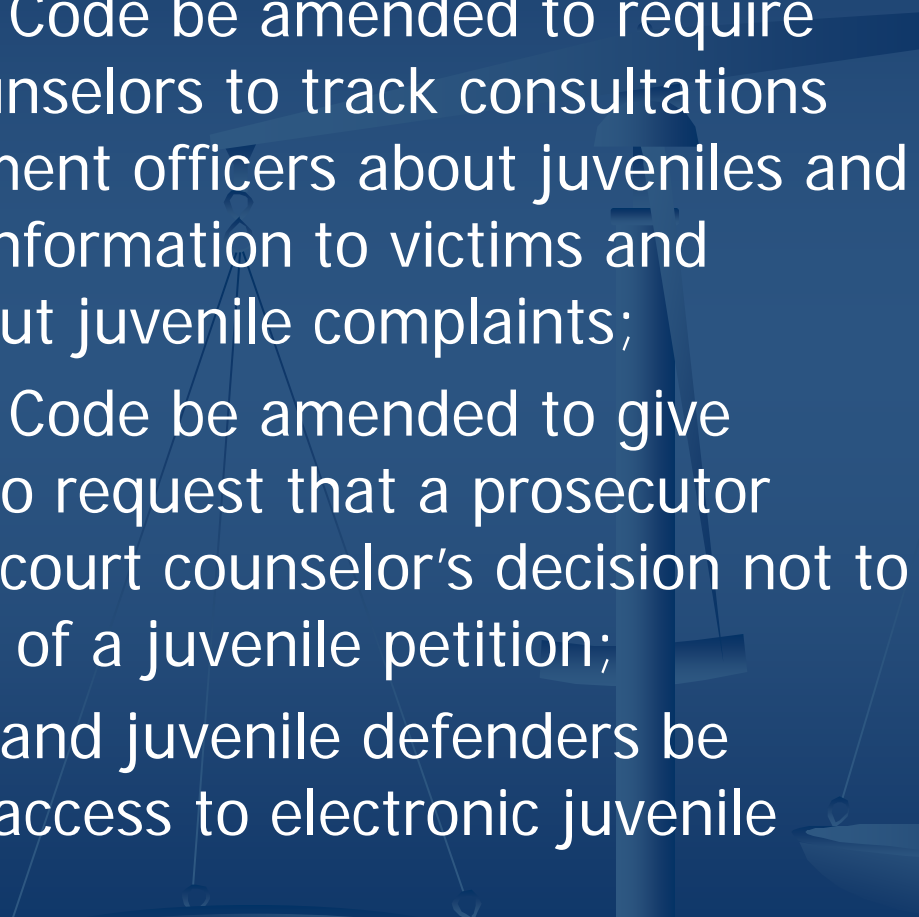
- Complaint in juvenile court
- Heard in juvenile court
- Parent required to be involved
- Sanctions on a continuum
- Confined in youth facility
- Records are confidential
- Avoids collateral consequences
- Charged like an adult
- Held in jail
- Convicted of a crime
- Little parental involvement
- Serves sentence in prison
- All records are public
- Severe collateral consequences



# Raise the Age Proposal

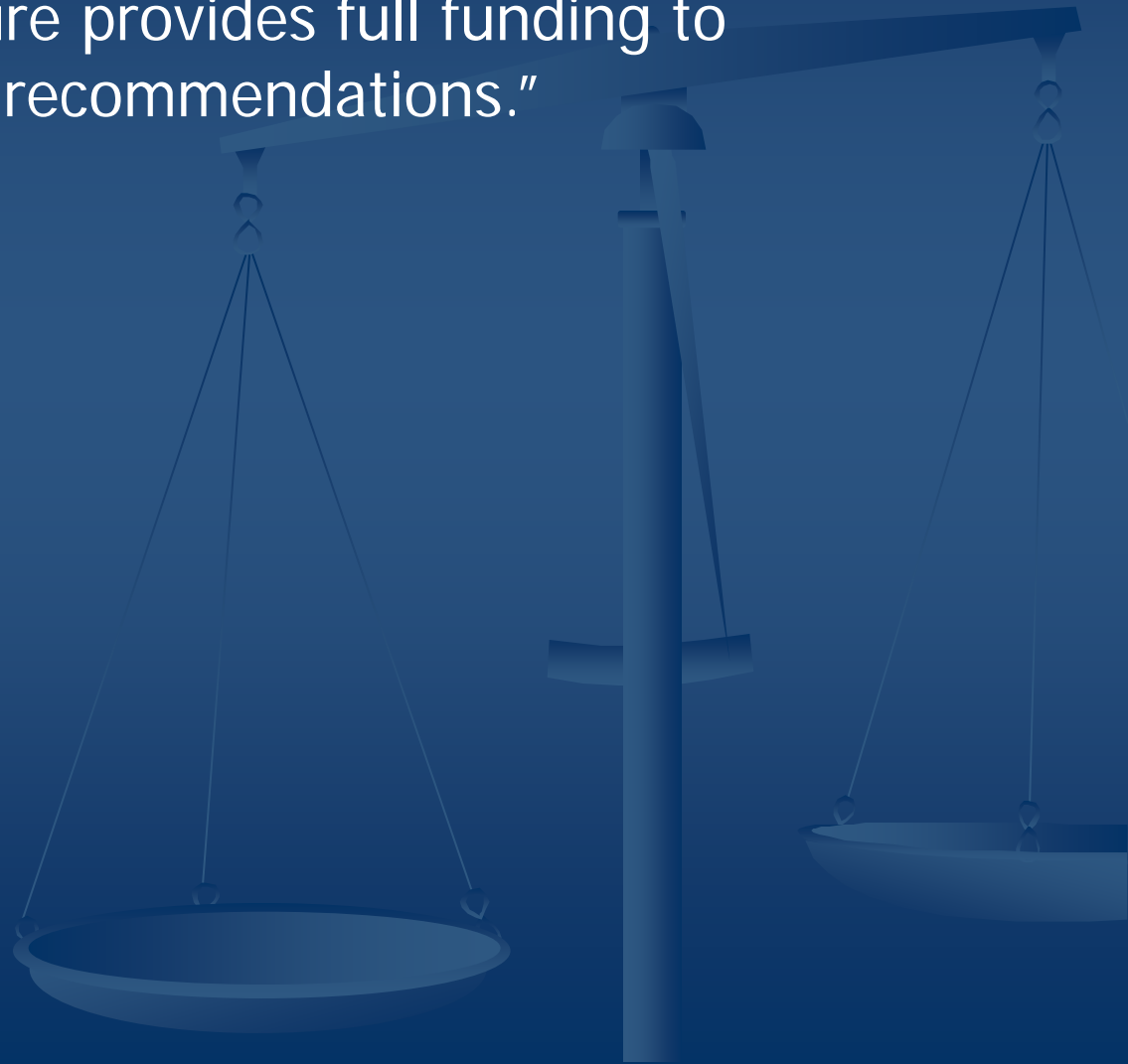
- That the current procedure in G.S. 7B-2200 authorizing the transfer of juveniles to superior court is maintained, except that 16- and 17-year-olds who commit Class A-E felonies will be automatically transferred upon a finding of probable cause or an indictment;
  - That the Juvenile Code be amended to give law enforcement officers greater access to information about juveniles to assist them in exercising their discretion to make decisions about custody, release, and filing a complaint;
- 

# Raise the Age Proposal

- That the Juvenile Code be amended to require juvenile court counselors to track consultations with law enforcement officers about juveniles and to provide more information to victims and complainants about juvenile complaints;
  - That the Juvenile Code be amended to give victims the right to request that a prosecutor review a juvenile court counselor's decision not to approve the filing of a juvenile petition;
  - That prosecutors and juvenile defenders be provided greater access to electronic juvenile records; and
- 

# Raise the Age Proposal

- That the legislature provides full funding to implement these recommendations."



# Raise the Age Proposal

North Carolina data shows a significant 7.5% decrease in recidivism when teens are adjudicated in the juvenile versus the adult system.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICAL PROFILE, *supra* note 54, at Tables 9 and 11 (showing a two-year recidivism rate for 16-17 year old probationers to be 49.3% and a two-year recidivism rate for 15-year-olds to be 41.8%).

North Carolina data also shows that when youthful offenders are prosecuted in the adult system, they recidivate at a rate that is 12.6% higher than the overall population.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICAL PROFILE, *supra* note 54, at Table 9 (while the overall probation entry population recidivates at a rate of 36.7%, 16- and 17-year-olds recidivate at the much higher rate of 49.3%).

# Raise the Age Proposal

In 2009, the Governor's Crime Commission Juvenile Age Study submitted to the General Assembly included a cost-benefit analysis of raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18. The analysis, done by ESTIS Group, LLC, found that the age change would result in a net benefit to the state of \$7.1 million.

GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION JUVENILE AGE STUDY, A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF EXPANDING THE JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION 4-6 (2009) [hereinafter 2009 GOVERNOR'S CRIME COMMISSION REPORT].

# Raise the Age Proposal

- In 2011, the Youth Accountability Planning Task Force submitted its final report to the General Assembly. The Task Force's report included a cost-benefit analysis, done by the Vera Institute of Justice, of prosecuting 16 and 17-year-old misdemeanants and low-level felons in juvenile court. That report estimated net benefits of \$52.3 million.

YOUTH ACCOUNTABILITY TASK FORCE REPORT, *supra* note 3.

# William Lassiter

Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice

[william.lassiter@ncdps.gov](mailto:william.lassiter@ncdps.gov)

(919) 825-2719

... by providing the right service, at the right time, in the right place