

The time is now!

Raise the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction in Missouri and Invest in ALL Our Children

What does “**Raise the Age**” mean?

- ❖ In Missouri, the definition of “child” for delinquency and status offenses, is “any person under seventeen years of age”(211.021 RSMo), which means (1) any person seventeen years of age who commits a crime is considered an adult and prosecuted accordingly and (2) there is no intervention/jurisdiction – either in the juvenile courts or adult courts – over seventeen year olds who run away from home, or who are beyond the control of their parents;
- ❖ The definition of “child” for abuse and neglect is “any person, regardless of physical or mental condition, under eighteen years of age” (210.110 RSMo), which means that a seventeen year old may come into care if abused or neglected by their parent or custodian;
- ❖ Because Missouri has two different definitions of “child”, there is a gap in the system where status offenses are concerned. For example, seventeen year olds may leave their parental home without permission and live elsewhere. Parents, then, have limited ability to ensure safety and control behaviors, but could still be held liable for their child’s actions. Currently, there is no recourse to parents of seventeen year olds because juvenile courts do not have jurisdiction over seventeen year olds and there is no companion language in any of the “adult” laws which can be enforced.
- ❖ If the definition of “child” in Chapter 211 were changed, to “any person under **eighteen** years of age” this would give the juvenile court exclusive jurisdiction over seventeen year olds for both delinquency and status offenses as well as abuse and neglect

Why serve seventeen year olds in the Missouri Juvenile Court System?

- Missouri is a national leader among state juvenile systems, commonly referred to by other states as the “Missouri Model”
 - Missouri is a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Replication State with 18 jurisdictions involved in the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s JDAI Initiative
<https://community.aecf.org/login.jspp?referer=%2Fcommunity%2Fjdai-connect>
 - Since 2005, Missouri Juvenile Officers have developed and utilized detention alternatives, thereby reducing the number of admissions to Missouri Juvenile Detention facilities by over 50%
 - Missouri Division of Youth Services (DYS) and Juvenile and Family Courts partner to divert youth who would otherwise be committed to DYS, thus reducing commitments by 31% since 2009
 - Missouri utilizes statewide risk and needs assessments to assess a youth’s risk of recidivating as well as their needs. The results of those assessments help formulate a youth’s treatment plans, focusing on competency development and rehabilitation.



- The Missouri Juvenile Justice system uses trauma-informed principles and practices as mandated in the Juvenile Officer Performance Standards (2017).
- All Missouri Division of Youth Services' facilities as well as all of Missouri's juvenile detention centers, are in compliance with the federal prison Rape Elimination Act(PREA)
- Adolescent brain development research shows that the brain is not fully developed until age 25; adolescents act impulsively and don't think about the long term consequences of their behavior
- Majority of offenses committed by 17 year olds are non-violent in nature and are misdemeanors
- Missouri is **ONE** of only **FIVE** states who treat seventeen year olds as adults for all criminal offenses. All other states have recognized the need to treat seventeen year olds as the children they really are

What Impact will Raise the Age have on the Missouri Juvenile Court System?

- ❖ An estimated 11,000 seventeen year olds will be referred to the juvenile courts in Missouri
- ❖ Missouri Juvenile and Family Courts as well as Missouri Division of Youth services will need additional resources, including treatment and program dollars and - in some jurisdictions- additional staff
 - According to CY 2016 Weighted Workload data, an additional 29 deputy juvenile officers are needed to meet current needs of youth presently served (does not include 17 year olds) by Missouri's juvenile courts
 - A combination of local and state dollars will be needed
 - Fiscal note projections estimate costs to be approximately 10 million in State funds
 - Single County Circuits (local funds) estimate costs to be approximately 10 million
 - Department of Corrections estimates a cost avoidance of approximately 14 million (State Funds)
 - **Actual** cost of serving seventeen year olds in the juvenile justice system is **unknown**, and most states who raised the age found the costs were less than originally projected.
- ❖ **All** of Missouri's children will have a greater chance of succeeding and becoming productive members of society



Invest in Missouri's children and RAISE THE AGE of juvenile court jurisdiction!

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