



Experience in other states shows that raising the age is cost-effective

Rhode Island lowered its age of adult jurisdiction from 18 to 17 in 2007 in an attempt to save money. It actually cost the state money. To keep kids safe in adult prisons, Rhode Island had to put them in maximum security, where the yearly per-inmate cost was \$104,000 – more than in the juvenile justice system, which also provided far better rehabilitative services. Legislators raised the age back to 18 within four months. “It’s a gross failure of responsibility,” the state’s attorney general, Patrick C. Lynch told *The New York Times*. “It’s not saving money. It’s creating enormous questions and problems in the system, never mind ruining lives” of young offenders who are left with criminal records.

Connecticut spent less on juvenile justice after raising its age from 16 to 18. In FY 2001-2002, the state spent \$139 million (adjusted for inflation) on juvenile justice. In FY 2011-2012, after raising its age of adult prosecution from 16 to 18 to include both sixteen and seventeen year olds, the state spent \$137 million. The savings were realized because the juvenile justice system continues to shrink because of legislation similar to CHINS reform recently passed in Massachusetts and because of a declining juvenile crime rate. The juvenile crime rate in Massachusetts has dropped almost 37 percent in just the last two years.

Illinois closed one detention center and two incarceration facilities after raising the age for some 17-year-olds. In 2010, the state added 17-year-olds accused of misdemeanors to the juvenile system. Many juvenile facilities still have excess capacity because of the drop in juvenile crime, a nationwide phenomenon. Even with the addition of 17-year-olds, the state is seeing fewer juvenile arrests than it did in 2008. There has been a 14 percent decline in violent crime since the law changed. In May, 2013, the state expanded that to include felony charges because the addition of misdemeanor cases went so smoothly and because housing 17-year-olds in adult facilities will soon constitute a violation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act and result in a loss of federal funds.