



Rising Crime in Perspective: juveniles still account for small portion of arrestees

Background: The 2005 FBI Uniform Crime Reports were released on Monday, September 18, and some media noted concerns of a 19 percent increase in juvenile murder arrests (representing a numerical increase of +145 arrests, nationwide). The Justice Policy Institute (JPI), a Washington, D.C. based policy group that promotes fair and rational justice policies, cautions that a one-year change in arrests cannot be interpreted as a “trend,” and that no single factor can explain changes in arrests across the nation, or within a jurisdiction. JPI cautions that, the UCR represents crime reported to law enforcement only. It does not account for changes in law enforcement practices that may lead to more reports of crime (i.e. changes in policing practices, or enforcement), versus true victimization and crime. Criminologists and law enforcement use both the UCR, and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to get a true and detailed sense of public safety by region, specific population subsets, and type of offense.¹ **In any case, young people are not driving the one-year increase in crime seen thus far.** To put the new figures from the UCR in their appropriate context, JPI draws a couple of key findings from this new survey.

Adults, not juveniles, represent 84 percent of all violent crime arrests—the increase in juvenile crime is a fraction of the nation’s public safety challenges.

Adults are responsible for 91 percent of all homicide arrests, 84 percent of rape arrests, 75 percent of robbery arrests and 86 percent of aggravated assault arrests. The proportion of violent crime involving juvenile arrestees has not changed much since the previous year.

While the increase in juvenile arrests for homicide (an increase of +145, nationwide), robbery (+3,268), and aggravated assaults (+1,876) are a cause for concern, these figures need to be kept in their proper context: The FBI reports that there were 1,390,695 violent crimes nationwide in 2005.

**Juvenile vs. Adult Arrests
Percentage of Total Arrests for Violent Crimes**

	2004		2005	
	Juveniles	Adults	Juveniles	Adults
Murder	8.2%	91.8%	9.0%	91.0%
Rape	16.2%	83.8%	15.4%	84.6%
Robbery	23.2%	76.8%	25.2%	74.8%
Aggravated Assault	13.8%	86.2%	13.6%	86.4%
Total Arrests	15.5%	84.5%	15.8%	84.2%

A recent study from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Violent Felons in Large Urban Counties*, is an analysis of violent felony cases from jurisdictions that together accounted for half of the reported violent crime in the nation. According to this report, 10 percent of homicide convictions, 12 percent of robbery convictions, and 4 percent of rape and assault convictions were under the age of 18.

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¹For more information see “the Nation’s two crime measures,” <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/html/ntcm.htm>