

Violent Youth Arrests Continue to Fall Nationwide

by Jeffrey A. Butts

According to national arrest estimates calculated with data released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), law enforcement agencies across the United States made about 53,000 violent crime arrests involving youth under age 18 in 2013, compared with more than 60,000 in 2012.

The FBI data series tracks violent crime trends using the four offenses of murder, rape*, robbery, and aggravated assault. The number of youth arrests for these offenses dropped again between 2012 and 2013. The total number of violent youth crime arrests fell eight percent, led by a decline of 12 percent in arrests for aggravated assault.

Between 2012 and 2013, according to FBI data, the number of youth arrests for rape declined more than three percent, while robbery arrests dropped nearly four percent.

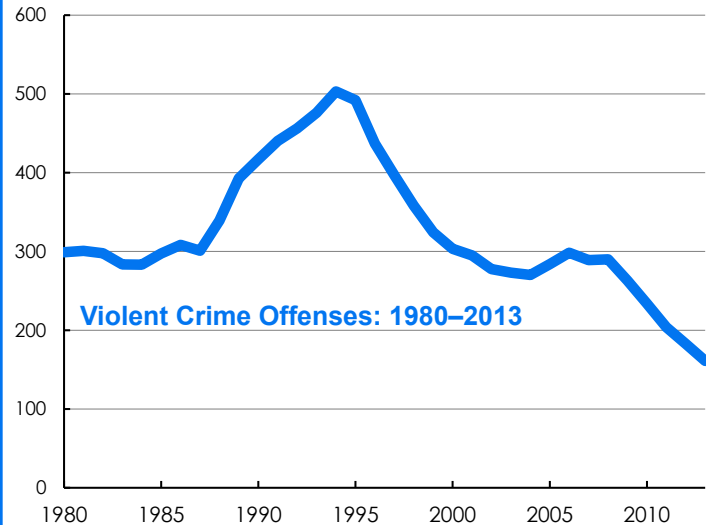
The number of youth arrests for homicide, on the other hand, increased 14 percent. Due to the small number of homicide arrests, however, this change was generated by fewer than 100 arrests nationwide. Measured in per capita terms, the rate of murder arrests barely changed, remaining just above 2 per 100,000 in 2013 as in 2012.

The effect of the decline in violent youth crime since the 1990s is clear when viewing arrest rates. In 1994, police reported about 500 violent youth crime arrests for every 100,000 10-17-olds in the population. Violent crime rates fell sharply through 2001, before rebounding to nearly 300 arrests per 100,000 in 2006.

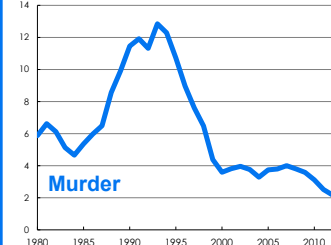
After 2008, the arrest rate fell sharply again. Between 2009 and 2013, the rate of youth violence was cut almost in half, dropping to about 160 arrests per 100,000 juveniles. The total arrest rate for violent youth crime has dropped to a new annual low every year from 2009 through 2013.

Violent Youth Crime Rates Falling Sharply

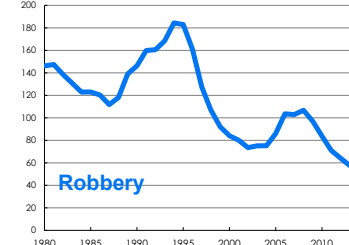
National Arrests Involving Youth Under Age 18 per 100,000 Population Ages 10-17



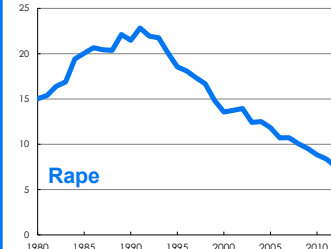
Youth Arrests per 100,000 Population



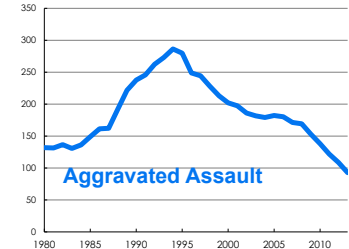
Youth Arrests per 100,000 Population



Youth Arrests per 100,000 Population



Youth Arrests per 100,000 Population



* The FBI recently began to modify the definition of rape in its compilation of national data. This report uses the legacy definition.

DATA SOURCE: National estimates based on FBI's data as published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) with the exception of 2013 estimates which are calculated by John Jay College using the same estimation methods adopted by BJS. (See Snyder, H.N. & Mulako-Wangota, J. (2014). Arrest Data Analysis Tool. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.) Unlike BJS, however, this analysis calculates juvenile arrest rates using the youth population ages 10-17 as the denominator.