Juvenile Justice Reform: The Connecticut Experience
Presentation Outline

1. Connecticut Juvenile Justice System “Before” Reform
2. Connecticut Juvenile Justice System “After” Reform
3. How Did We Get There?
4. Continuing Challenges and Opportunities for Local Officials
Connecticut Juvenile Justice “Before” Reform

- High Court Intake
- High Detention Admissions
- Emily J. Lawsuit (1993-2007) on Detention
  - Conditions of Confinement
  - Lack of Services
  - Long stays
- Status Offense Violators in Detention
High Number of Commitments to Out of Home Placement

“Non Evidence-Based Programs”

Legislative Study Found Programs “Ineffective at Reducing Recidivism”

“Better to do nothing!!!”
Connecticut Juvenile Justice “Before” Reform

- Few Customized Services for Special Populations
  - Girls, mental health, and young children
- 10,000 16 and 17 Year Olds in Adult System
  - Low Program Completion Rate
  - High Recidivism Rate

Tow Youth Justice Institute
Connecticut Juvenile Justice “After” Reform

- Court intake
- Detention intake
- Placement Waits in Detention
- Commitment to “Out of Home”
- Juvenile Crime Rates
- Probation Recidivism
- No Status Offenders in Detention

16 and 17 Year olds in the Juvenile Justice System

University of New Haven
Tow Youth Justice Institute
• The number of juveniles referred to the court is down 21.3% since 2007, despite full implementation of Raise the Age.
• The “anticipated” doubling of the court intake did not happen.
There was a 38.5% decrease in average daily population of State Centers from 2007 to 2014.
There is a 71% decrease from 1999 to 2014 in the number of court commitments to DCF - the largest decrease in juvenile incarceration in the U.S.
Juvenile Probation Reduction in Recidivism

There was a 11% percentage deduction from 2007 to 2014 in rearrests
National research comparing juvenile and adult processing of similar adolescents find better outcomes in juvenile court. Here is proof in CT.
How Did We Get There

1. Collaboration
2. Diversion
3. Reduce Detention
4. Evidence Based Practices and Programming
5. Accountability Systems
Opportunities for Local Reform

- Police Departments and the use of discretion
- Schools-based arrests, suspensions, expulsions
- Disproportionate Minority Contact
- Family Engagement
- Vocational Opportunities
- Information sharing
Questions?
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