

Violent Youth Crime Plummets to a 30-year Low

by Jeffrey A. Butts

In 2011, the most recent national data available, U.S. law enforcement agencies made nearly 1.5 million arrests involving youth under 18 years of age. Of these arrests, 68,000 involved one of the four offenses included in the FBI's Violent Crime Index: murder (800), forcible rape (2,700), robbery (23,700), and aggravated assault (40,600). In 1994, law enforcement reported more than 150,000 youth arrests for these crimes.

The number of violent crime arrests involving under-18 youth dropped considerably since 2010. As reported by the FBI in October 2012, the number of youth arrests for aggravated assault dropped 11 percent between 2010 and 2011, while arrests for robbery fell 12 percent, forcible rape arrests dipped 6 percent, and arrests for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter plummeted 20 percent.

When viewed as a per capita rate (i.e., the number of under-18 arrests per 100,000 10-17 year-olds in the U.S. population), the continuing decline in youth violence is apparent. The violent crime arrest rate for youth peaked at 500 per 100,000 10-17 year-olds in 1994, before falling below 280 arrests per 100,000 in 2004.

Violent youth arrests began to grow after 2004, however, reaching a rate of nearly 300 per 100,000 10-17 year-olds between 2006 and 2008.

Between 2008 and 2011, the violent youth arrest rate fell sharply once again, plunging from approximately 300 to 200 arrests per 100,000 youth. In 2011, the violent crime arrest rate was 30 percent lower than it had been just three years earlier in 2008.

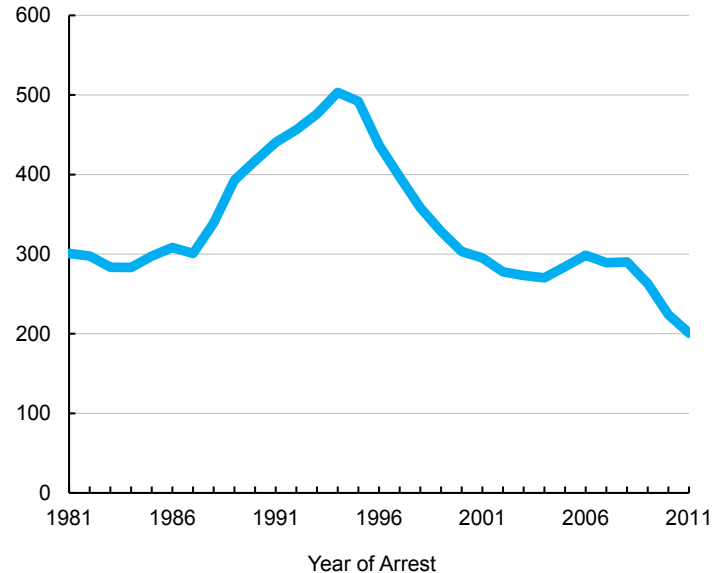
All Violent Crime Index Offenses Fell in 2011

Offenses Charged Against Youth Under Age 18	Estimated* Arrests: 2011	Percent Change 2010-2011
All Four Violent Crimes	68,000	- 11%
- Murder**	800	- 20%
- Forcible rape	2,700	- 6%
- Robbery	23,700	- 12%
- Aggravated assault	40,600	- 11%

** Includes non-negligent manslaughter.

Violent Crime Rate Down Sharply After 2008

Arrests of Under-18 Youth per 100,000 Population Ages 10-17



* Arrest figures are national estimates, derived by weighting the sample-specific figures from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports to represent the nation as a whole. Arrest rates are calculated by dividing national arrest estimates by the number of youth ages 10-17 in the U.S. population. Rates for 1981-2009 are calculated with national estimates from Snyder, Howard and J. Mulako-Wangota (2011). *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* at www.bjs.gov. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Rates for 2010 and 2011 are calculated directly from the arrest figures published in the FBI reports, *Crime in the United States*. Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice.