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Juvenile Justice in Utah

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Heard in Judiciary
Interim Committee
on Sept 16, 2025

Principles and Features

- Civil vs. Criminal System
 - Prioritizes rehabilitation and community safety, not punishment
- Key features of juvenile courts:
 - Closed proceedings
 - No jury trials
 - Specialized probation

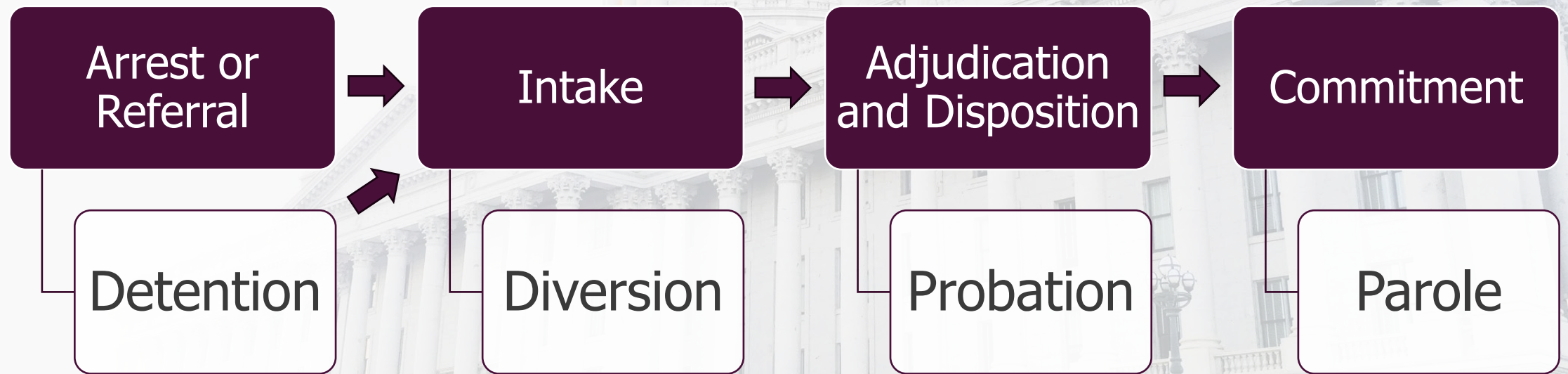


Juvenile Justice Terms

ADULT TERMINOLOGY	JUVENILE TERMINOLOGY
Crime	Offense/Delinquent Act
Defendant	Minor
Trial	Adjudication hearing
Found guilty	Adjudicated delinquent
Sentence	Disposition
File charges	Petition
Diversion	Nonjudicial adjustment (NJA)



The Process



Juvenile Justice Reform

Late '90s/2000s: Science of adolescent brain development

2016: Utah Juvenile Justice Working Group

- Identified issues in Utah's juvenile justice system
- Made 55 policy recommendations

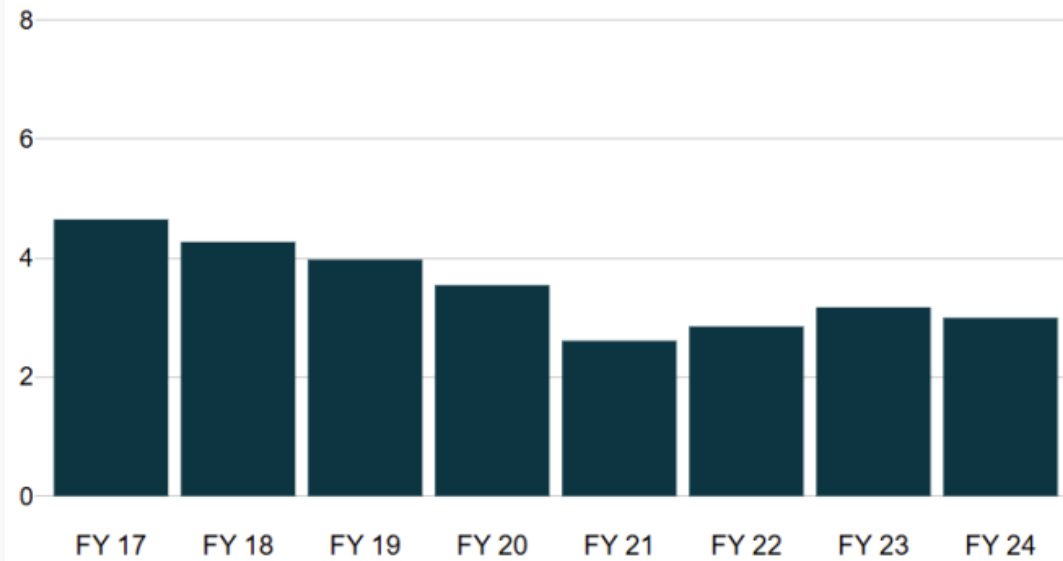
2017: HB239 "Juvenile Justice Amendments"

- Mandated diversion programs
- Standardized screening and risk-assessment tools
- Limited juvenile detention and confinement



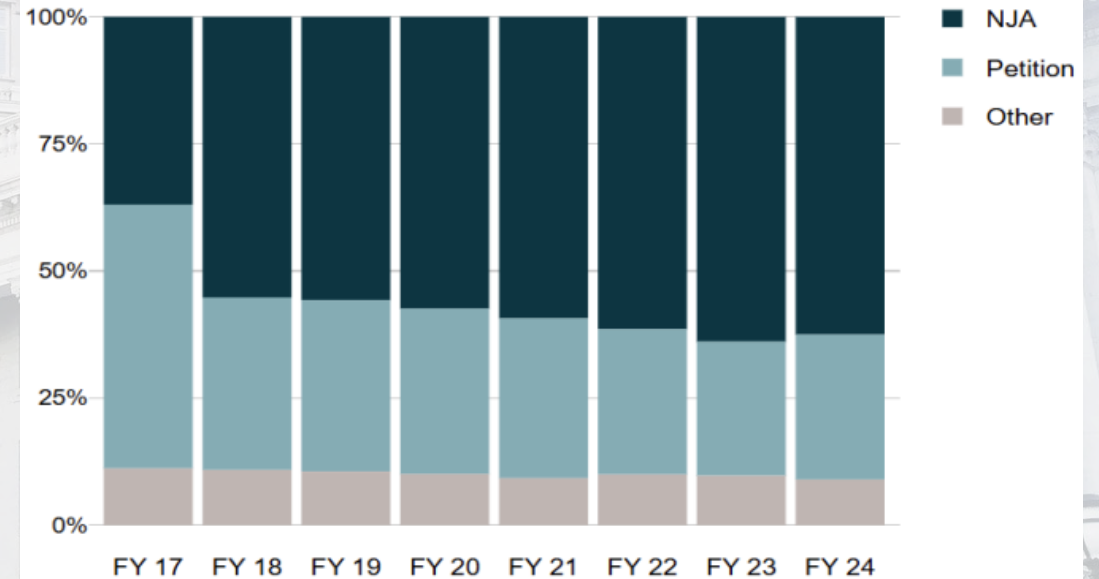
Data Trends

Figure 1: Rate of Court Referrals per 100 Minors



Source: [2024 Juvenile Justice Report](#)

Figure 2: Share of NJAs and Petitions



Source: [2024 Juvenile Justice Report](#)

Questions?



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