

# Keep Children Under 13 Out of Texas' Juvenile Punishment System

## Policy Background

In Texas, 10-, 11-, and 12-year-olds can and do become entangled in the juvenile punishment system, despite crime rates being low for this age group.<sup>1</sup> While, in most cases, children under 13 are placed on juvenile probation, that system comes with conditions that even adults struggle to comply with, and it sets kids down the pipeline to prison.

## Proposed Solution

Texas leaders should raise the minimum age of delinquency to 13 to prevent the youngest children from being swept under juvenile jurisdiction.

## Relevant Bills

- **Bill Number:** [HB 491](#) [Wu]  
**Bill Caption:** Relating to the age of a child at which a juvenile court may exercise jurisdiction over the child and to the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

## Other Materials

- [TCJE testimony on youth justice, including raising the minimum age of juvenile jurisdiction](#), submitted to the House Criminal Justice Reform, Interim Select Committee [August 2022]
- [TCJE testimony on HB 4371 \(2021 youth omnibus legislation\), including raising the floor of juvenile jurisdiction](#), submitted to the House Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Committee [April 2021]
- [TCJE testimony on the Texas Juvenile Justice Department](#), submitted to the Senate Finance Committee (pages 3-5) [March 2021]

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, "[Juvenile Arrests, 2018](#)," *Juvenile Justice Statistics: National Report Series Bulletin*, June 2020.