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23

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

**RECAP OF
SB 23**

DPS Authority/Crime Statistics Collection

Received February 13, 1989
by Sens. Faiks and Sturgulewski

Heard March 21, 1989
Heard March 22, 1989

Passed Out of Committee March 22, 1989
5 Do Pass

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(Audit Control Number 06-4251-86-S)
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Public Safety
February 1, 1989

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: February 13, 1989

FURTHER REFERRALS: JUDICIARY

Date of Committee Action: _____

The STATE AFFAIRS Committee considered:

SB 23

SENATE BILL NO. 23 [DPS AUTHORITY/CRIME STATISTICS COLLECTION]

"An Act relating to the recording and collection of crime statistics."

RECOMMENDS:

- replacing with _____ the same title
- the attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: Senate letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

- fiscal impact
- zero fiscal note
- zero with analysis

APPROVES PREVIOUS:

- fiscal note(s) published:
- zero fiscal notes(s) published:
2/1/89 DPS

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING OTHER THAN DO PASS:
(Do Not Pass, No Recommendation, Amend)

Dave Nealey

Jim Schwach

Richard P. Mackeen

Al J...

Ch. A. ...

Ch. A. ...

 Chairman's signature

1 IN THE SENATE

BY FAIKS AND
STURGULEWSKI

2

SENATE BILL NO. 23

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

A BILL

6

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to the recording and collection of
7 crime statistics."

8

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9

* Section 1. AS 44.41.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to

10 read:

11

(c) The department shall establish, and may require state and

12

local law enforcement agencies to use, standardized methods of col-

13

lecting and recording law enforcement and crime statistics.

change, clarification ->

*local dep'ts have their own
work flow to force 1570*

position pay - 570 MYRA

STATE OF ALASKA
1989 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION: SB 23
PUBLISH DATE: 2/1/89

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: The recording and collection
of crime statistics
Sponsor: Sen. Faiks, Sturquilewski
Requestor: Senate State Affairs

Agency Affected: Public Safety
BRU: DPS Administration
Component: Data & Word Processing

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars) (Inflation not included)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Because the Department of Public Safety (DPS) is presently compiling the data now submitted by local departments, no fiscal impact on DPS is anticipated.

Prepared by: Kenneth E. Bischoff, Director
Division: Administrative Services

Phone: 465-4322
Date: 1/30/89

Approved by Commissioner: SAH Arthur English
Agency: Department of Public Safety

Date: 1/30/89

Letter of Intent
for
SB 23.

It is the intent of the Senate that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) work with local police departments statewide in order to develop methods of implementing SB 23 over time in a manner that have negligible financial impact on those departments and which do not create disincentives to participate in the collection of data for the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

Dist by Senators Pourchot + Faiks

Senate adopted 2/9/89

Alaska State Legislature

Chairman
(907) 465-4523



Jan Faiks
Post Office Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Senate Judiciary Committee

February 23, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Red Boucher, Chairman
House State Affairs Committee

FROM: Senator Jan Faiks, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

SUBJECT: SB 23 "An Act relating to the recording and
collection of crime statistics."

Senate Bill 23 has been referred to the House State Affairs Committee for consideration. This bill proposes an amendment to AS 44.41.020, which defines the duties of the Department of Public Safety (DPS). This bill passed the Senate on February 9, 1989 by a vote of 16 - 3, along with the attached letter of intent.

At the present time, DPS collects crime data from local law enforcement agencies, processes it, and then returns it to the agencies in the form of statistical summaries of the crime situation in each community. These summaries are a part of the Alaska Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). DPS, however, has no authority to require that participating agencies submit the raw data in a uniform manner. The purpose of SB 23 is to give DPS the authority to establish and require the use of standardized methods of collecting and recording law enforcement and crime statistics by local departments.

SB 23 was introduced as a result of a recommendation contained in a 1986 Legislative Audit report on the Division of Family and Youth Services. A copy of that audit is attached. The audit was performed because of the conflict between crime statistics, which showed that juvenile crime was falling, and police officials, who said that juvenile crime was actually rising. The auditors found that flaws in the way the state

Members
Mike Szymanski, Vice-Chairman • Rick Halford • Drue Pearce • Pat Rodey

Out of Session
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collected crime data might understate the actual rate of juvenile crime.

Accordingly, the auditors recommended that DPS be given the authority to require standardized methods of recording and collecting crime statistics by local departments statewide.

The slightly different collection and classification procedures used by the more than 20 police jurisdictions in Alaska that elect to participate in the UCR can distort the statewide crime statistics for all crime, not just juvenile crime.

Most of the local police agencies that currently elect to participate in the Department's system use an incident-by-incident method of reporting all criminal calls they answer. However, the State's two largest police departments, Anchorage and Fairbanks, as well as the State Troopers, employ the summary method of data collection.

As the name implies, the incident-by-incident format requires departments to keep a log of all police calls they answer, coded in accordance with uniform standards, and submit this information to DPS monthly. DPS keypunches this raw data and produces various informational reports that are returned to the reporting localities. DPS additionally retains this information and uses it to develop an annual statewide crime report.

In the summary method, the local departments do their own processing of the raw data using slightly different classification systems, and submit the data to DPS already summarized. DPS then "fits" this information together with the incident data collected from other local agencies for the annual statewide report. This results in a distortion of statewide crime statistics.

The state participates in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, and provides statewide data to the FBI. The FBI recognizes the problems caused by different reporting methods, and is recommending that the incident-by-incident method be used, using standard reporting forms developed by that agency. This would be one option for standardization which SB 23 would give to DPS.

Current law does not require local communities to participate in the UCR, and this bill does not change that. It merely gives DPS the authority to require that those agencies which do elect to participate provide data in a uniform manner.

As legislators, we make important public policy decisions based upon our perception of the level and nature of crime in

our state. Without accurate data, we cannot make intelligent decisions. For this reason, I would appreciate the committee's consideration of SB 23 at its earliest convenience.

CITATION

Honoring - A Kid's Place, Anchorage Kid's Day
by Senators Uehling, Pourchot, Pearce, Rodey,
Szymanski, Faiks, Sturgulowski, Kerttula,
Halford and Kelly

Senator Halford moved and asked unanimous consent that the citation be adopted. Without objection, the citation was adopted and referred to the Secretary for transmittal.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CALENDAR cont'd

SENATE BILLS IN THIRD READING

SB 23

SENATE BILL NO. 23 (An Act relating to the recording and collection of crime statistics) and the motion on the adoption of the Letter of Intent were before the Senate.

Senator Faiks moved and asked unanimous consent to withdraw the motion to adopt the Letter of Intent. Without objection, it was so ordered.

A new Letter of Intent was offered by Senators Pourchot and Faiks:

Letter of Intent
for
Senate Bill No. 23

It is the intent of the Senate that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) work with local police departments statewide in order to develop methods of implementing SB 23 over time in a manner that have negligible financial impact on those departments and which do not create disincentives to participate in the collection of data for the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

Senator Faiks moved and asked unanimous consent that the Letter of Intent be adopted as a Senate Letter of Intent. Without objection, the Senate Letter of Intent was adopted.

A REPORT ON THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES
JUVENILE CRIME STATISTICS

March 25, 1986

Audit Control Number

06-4251-86-S

Commissioner, Department of
Health and Social Services

John Pugh

Deputy Commissioner, Department
of Health and Social Services

Connie Sipe

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STATE OF ALASKA

AUDIT DIVISION
POUCH W
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-3300

THE LEGISLATURE

BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

March 27, 1986

Members of the Legislative Budget
and Audit Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Title 24 and a special
request of the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee, the
attached report is submitted for your review.

A REPORT ON THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES
JUVENILE CRIME STATISTICS

March 25, 1986

Audit Control Number

06-4251-86-S



Gerald L. Wilkerson, CPA
Legislative Auditor
Division of Legislative Audit

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

In accordance with the provisions of Title 24 of the Alaska Statutes and a special request of the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee, we conducted a review of the statistics and analysis regarding the annual trends in juvenile crime in Alaska over the past five years (1979-1983). The review was conducted in order to reconcile the claims of law enforcement officials that juvenile crime is increasing with the statistical data that indicates the contrary.

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

Title 47 of the Alaska Statutes charges the Department of Health and Social Services with the responsibility of directly providing, or arranging through contract, a range of services designed to remedy or prevent neglect, abuse, and exploitation of children, youth, and adults. They are also responsible for providing care and protection for juveniles committed to their custody by the Superior Court.

The Division's activities are mainly conducted by three sections: Family Services, Adult Services, and Youth Services. Family Services is responsible for offering a wide range of services including, but not limited to: individual and family counseling services, child protection services including the investigation of reported incidents of abuse and neglect, arranging and supervising emergency shelter and foster home care, and licensing and monitoring private non-medical community care facilities. The section has five regional offices in Ketchikan, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel, and Nome and also twenty-nine field offices.

The Adult Services section is responsible for providing services to adults exposed to abuse, neglect, or exploitation. These services would include providing support to individuals who need out-of-home care.

The Youth Services section is responsible for providing a range of diversion, intervention, and rehabilitative services to juveniles found delinquent by the courts. The section has three district offices in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks and three youth facilities; McLaughlin Youth Center, Fairbanks Youth Facility, and Nome Youth Facility.

AUDITOR'S COMMENTS

Statistics cited by the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) do indicate that the rate of juvenile crime has declined during the past five years (1979-83). As presented in the following Findings and Recommendation section, we found that there may be significant factors in how the statistics are collected and reported that could understate the actual level of juvenile crime.

The juvenile crime rate is measured by the number of arrests made and reported to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), compared to the annual population statistics developed by the Department of Labor. The information used by DFYS in their analysis is supported by the available statistics, and in our opinion, DFYS draws logical public policy conclusions from the information.

It should be noted that the factors we discuss in the Findings and Recommendation section that may lead to understating juvenile arrests should not have a direct impact on serious or violent crimes. Juveniles are consistently arrested for such crimes and we could expect them to be counted consistently on a year-to-year basis. Accordingly, although there may be some merit to those who dispute the crime rate statistical evidence, we believe that their argument is less convincing in the area of serious or violent crimes. The statistical evidence of decline in the rate of serious juvenile crime is more convincing and less open to question.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation No. 1

The Legislature should consider legislation that would give the Department of Public Safety authority to require standardized recording and collection of statistics by local departments statewide.

The juvenile crime rate, as cited by Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS), is measured by the number of arrests made and reported to the Department of Public Safety (DPS), compared to the annual population statistics developed by the Department of Labor (see Appendix A for the narrative and graphs used in DFYS's analysis). Arrest statistics have traditionally been used by social scientists and policy makers as a measure of criminal activity.

DPS gathers information and reports on arrest statistics annually. DPS develops their statistics based on reports from over 20 police jurisdictions throughout the State. These various jurisdictions report to DPS in two different ways:

1. On an incident-by-incident format.
2. In a summary format.

Most of the local police departments that elect to participate in the DPS system use the incident format. As the name implies, these departments keep a log of all police calls they answer, coded in accordance with uniform standards, and submit this information to DPS monthly. DPS keypunches this raw data and produces various informational reports that are returned to the reporting police localities. Additionally, DPS maintains the information on their computer files and uses it to develop an annual statewide crime report.

The State's two largest police departments, Anchorage and Fairbanks, along with the Alaska State Troopers submit their arrest information in a summary format. These agencies do their own processing of incident data, using slightly different definitions or classifications systems, and submit the data to DPS already summarized. DPS then "fits" this information together with the incident format data and prepares their annual publication Crime In Alaska.

Due to the size of the jurisdiction, procedures and methodologies used in Anchorage, in the collection and classification of juvenile arrests, could distort the statewide crime statistics.

Given the impact on public policy issues of these possible inconsistencies in the classification and reporting of arrest data between local jurisdictions in the State, the Legislature may wish to consider legislation that would give DPS authority to establish a uniform system of recording and classifying collection of arrest data information.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

JUVENILE JUSTICE IN ALASKA
a report to
THE HONORABLE BILL SHEFFIELD
GOVERNOR
STATE OF ALASKA
from the
DIVISION OF FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES
March 19, 1985

John R. Pugh
Commissioner
Department of Health & Social Services

Michael L. Price
Director
Division of Family & Youth Services

Executive Summary

Despite widespread and persistent beliefs, juvenile crime in Alaska is neither increasing nor becoming more violent. The best measures show that while adult crime has increased at the same rate as the Alaska's population, juvenile crime has declined both in total numbers and rate and is only one-fourth of total crime in the state. Only 2% of Alaska's juvenile crime is violent crime. This is 1/10 of serious, violent crime in the state and only 1/2 of 1% of total Alaska crime.

Because juveniles commit generally less serious crimes and have a greater potential for rehabilitation than adult offenders, Alaska's juvenile justice system operates differently from the criminal justice system. The vast majority of young offenders are first time and less serious offenders who can be successfully diverted from the formal juvenile justice system. Court action is reserved for repeat offenders and those who have committed serious offenses. Most are adequately controlled and rehabilitated in community settings. A small number require the control and structure of secure detention and treatment facilities.

Programs for juvenile offenders were separated from adult correction programs and transferred to the Division of Family and Youth Services four years ago. Since then juvenile delinquency has received greater attention and services provided to protect the public and rehabilitate young offenders have increased dramatically. The number of youth under probation supervision is up 45% and the average populations of juvenile detention and secure treatment facilities have increased by 58% and 30% respectively. With greater focus, remedial increases in service, and earlier intervention fewer youth are "slipping between the cracks." Serious or repeat offenders are identified and dealt with sooner reducing multiple offenses. In short, increases and improvements in service seem to have been a primary factor in reducing juvenile crime in Alaska.

Despite essential growth, detention facilities average 40% above capacity and there are waiting lists for entry into secure treatment programs. Even planned expansion will not meet projected needs for these services. Overburdened programs quickly become ineffective and continued reductions in juvenile crime cannot be expected in the face of a growing population and overburdened programs.

The response cannot be to simply build more and larger facilities. This simplistic approach focuses massive resources on a single aspect of juvenile delinquency and has been discredited by its failure elsewhere. Its virtually limitless costs alone preclude adoption of this approach. Instead the Department of Health and Social Services has developed a balanced strategy essential in a time of decreasing resources and increasing population. The strategy emphasizes regionalization and increases in prevention, early intervention and communitybased services accompanied by modest increases in secure detention and treatment capacity. Other management initiatives to implement this strategy are development of a systematic method of case management and implementation of a comprehensive management information system (SYSMIS).

A systematic method of case management will provide a framework for effectively allocating resources on individual client and overall program levels, and for short and long range planning. A comprehensive information system is essential to provide information needed for monitoring and evaluating services and programs, and for decision making.

This strategy will help limit the need for growth in costly institutions, make community-based services available on a broader basis throughout the state and insure that limited resources are used most effectively to protect the public and rehabilitate young offenders.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE CRIME IN ALASKA

Certain misperceptions about juveniles and crime are widely accepted by the public and many policy makers and have influenced public policy relating to juvenile justice. These misperceptions are enforced periodically by sensational news reports and the entertainment media. It is important to consider these persistent perceptions in light of available facts if significant policy decisions are to be made wisely.

Incidence of Juvenile Crime

The most widely accepted belief about juvenile crime is that it is widespread and increasing - that there is a juvenile crime wave far out of proportion with the number of juveniles and beyond the level of adult crime. Available facts, however, do not support this belief.

Conservative estimates of population growth indicate that the population of youth in Alaska (those 0 - 18 years of age) increased by approximately 15% from 1979 to 1983. As Chart 1 indicates this represents an increase of 19,000 juveniles from 134,000 to 153,000. The adult population is believed to have grown at about the same rate and to be slightly more than twice the size as the juvenile population - approximately 320,000 persons.

Despite the significant population increase juvenile crime as measured by arrests declined slightly. Chart 2 shows that juvenile arrests have remained relatively stable between 1979 and 1983, declining slightly - about 6%. In contrast adult arrests have shown a marked increase after 1980 and an overall increase during the five year period of about 13%. Juveniles arrests have declined despite population growth while increases in arrests of adults have essentially paralleled population growth.

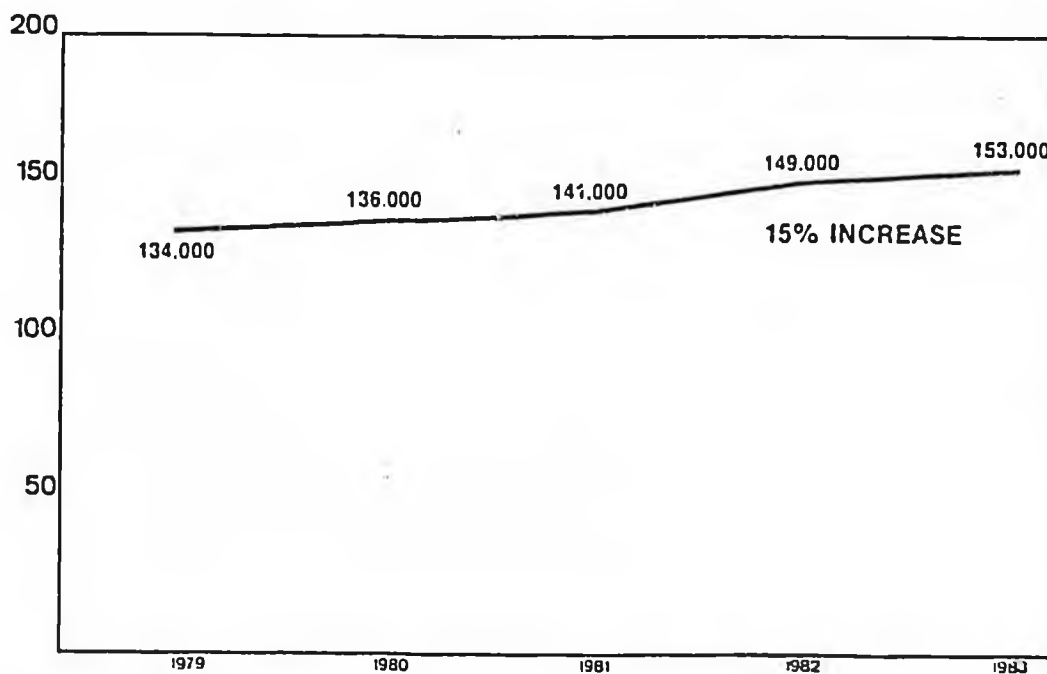
Chart 3 illustrates another important measure of crime, the rate of arrest. The rate of juvenile arrests (arrests per 1000 persons) was relatively stable until 1982 when it declined sharply. This decline continued in 1983 resulting in an overall decline of 24% during the period 1979 - 1983. This decline follows a national trend of decreasing juvenile arrest rates. However, Alaska's juvenile arrest rate, 32.24 per 1000, is less than one half the most recently calculated national rate. (1) In contrast Alaska's adult arrest rate does not show a similar trend although the 1983 level was slightly (8%) below the 1979 high of 46.56 arrests per 1000 persons.

In summary, juvenile arrests in Alaska are declining despite significant population increases and the rate of juvenile arrest has declined substantially. Alaska's juvenile arrest rate is far below the national juvenile rate and 25% lower than Alaska's adult arrest rate.

(1) Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice: The Data, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1983.

APPENDIX A

ALASKA YOUTH POPULATION (0 to 18 Years)

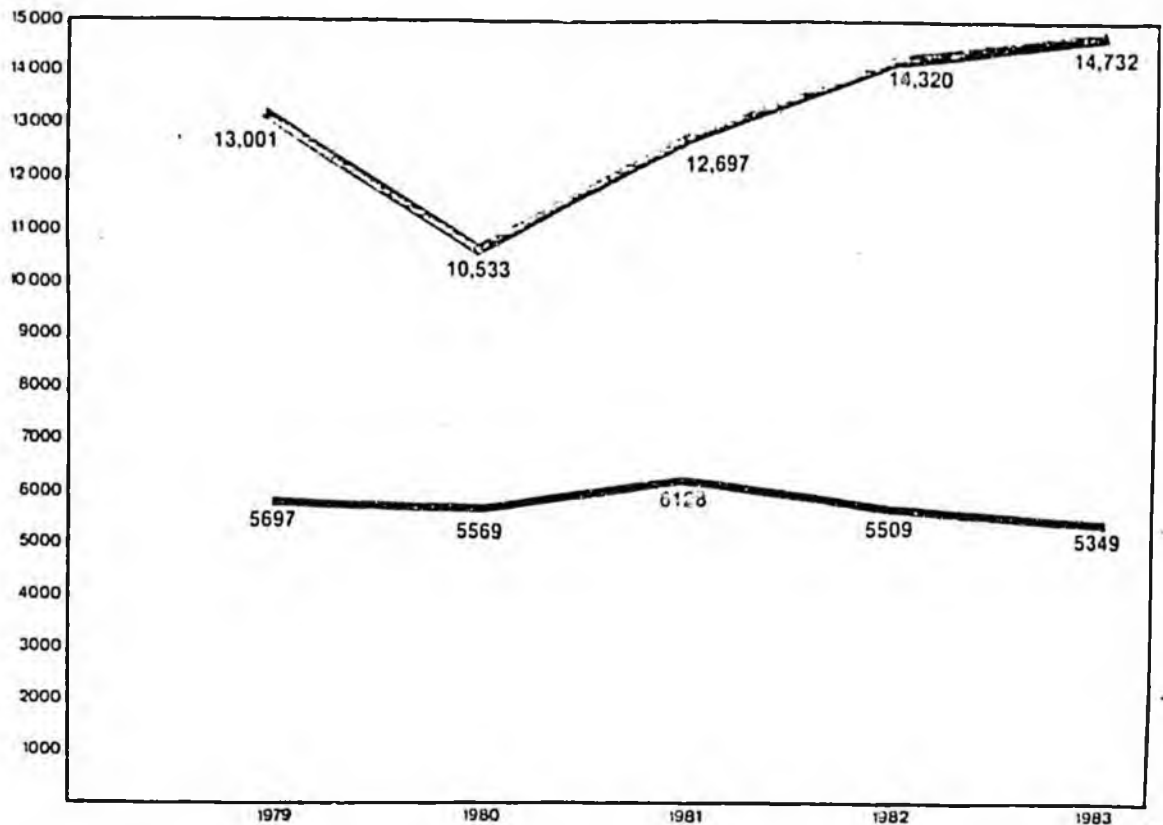


Source Data: Alaska Population Overview - 1981,
Alaska Department of Labor
U.S. Bureau of Census, 1980

CHART 1

APPENDIX A

ARRESTS IN ALASKA



Source: *Crime in Alaska 1979-1983*, Department of Law
Department of Public Safety

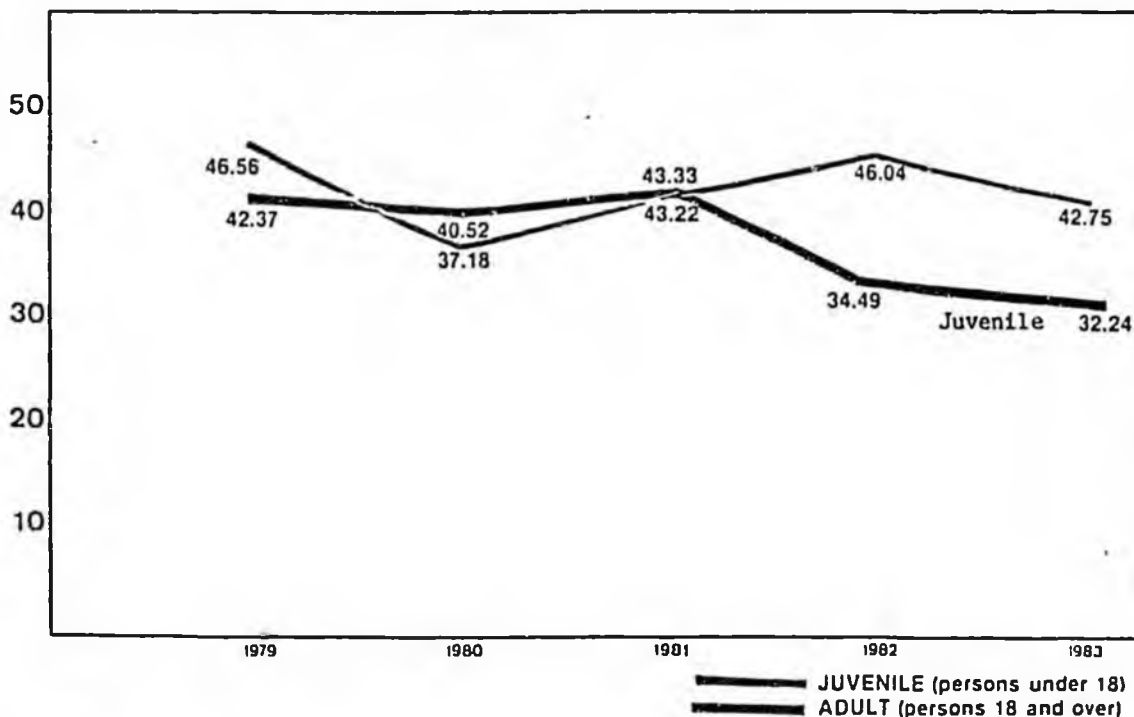
— JUVENILE (persons under 18)
— ADULT (persons 18 and over)

CHART 2

APPENDIX A

ALASKA ARREST RATES

ARRESTS
PER 1000
PERSONS



Data Sources: Arrest data: *Crime in Alaska - 1982*, Alaska Department of Public Safety
Alaska Population Overview - 1982, Alaska Department of Labor

CHART 3

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

POUCH H 01
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
PHONE: 465-3030

May 9, 1986

Mr. Gerald L. Wilkerson
Legislative Auditor
Division of Legislative Audit
Pouch W
Juneau, AK 99811

MAY - 9 1986

Dear Mr. Wilkerson:

Concerning the preliminary audit report entitled "A Report on the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Family and Youth Services, Juvenile Crimes Statistics, March 25th, 1986", our perspective does not differ greatly from that expressed by auditors. We agree with auditors that the conclusions we have drawn from available information on juvenile crime in Alaska are logical and appropriate. We believe also that our report on juvenile justice presented the best information from the most authoritative sources available. Similarly, we believe that the methodologies employed in our analysis of the information, though limited in level of sophistication by time and staff resources, were scientifically correct and defensible.

As the report pointed out there are minor differences in the collection and reporting techniques employed by Alaskan police agencies in compiling crime and arrest data. We believe, however, that the effect of these differences on the validity of the data is relatively insignificant. The FBI Uniform Crime Reporting System, used by the Department of Public Safety in compiling information for the report Crime in Alaska, was designed for use nationwide and to accommodate such differences among police agencies and jurisdictions. In any event, the effect of these differences would apply equally to both adult and juvenile crime data and would not affect the relative levels of juvenile and adult crime or trends reflected by the data.

Similarly, we believe the validity of the data used in our report clearly withstands anecdotal criticism of the two Anchorage police officers noted in the audit report. Though we recognize the value of practitioner experience in testing or confirming policies or practices in any field, we believe the limitations of individual experience and anecdote must be weighted carefully against other information when the sample of practitioners is small. In this instance we believe the assertions of the two officers are more representative of their personal philosophies, attitudes, and dissatisfaction with Alaska law regarding detention of juveniles than of policy or practice of the Anchorage Police Department or police agencies in general.

Though the audit report does not discuss official APD policy concerning response to reported juvenile crime or arrest of juvenile suspects, we are certain that APD policy neither endorses nor permits the practice of ignoring reported or witnessed crime simply because the alleged

perpetrator is a juvenile. Nor do we believe APD policy encourages officers to arrest juveniles only when the offense involved is of the most serious nature. Even if these approaches were sanctioned by policy APD's statistical reports clearly show they are not practiced.

The assertion that juveniles are not usually arrested in Anchorage except for serious crimes is convincingly disproven by APD's own arrest reports. These show that arrests of juveniles for less serious offenses (such as thefts, liquor law violations, vandalism, and status offenses) comprise the vast majority of juvenile arrests in Anchorage. Arrests for violent crimes accounted for an average of only 1.6% of juvenile arrests in Anchorage from 1977 through 1984. In fact, the number of curfew arrests alone averaged more than three times the number of violent crime arrests from 1977 through 1983.

In practice, then, Anchorage police (and police statewide) do routinely arrest juveniles for petty offenses and report status offense arrests. And, though police certainly exercise discretion in making arrest decisions, this occurs with adults as well as juveniles and informal police action affects arrest data for both groups. In fact, contrary to conventional wisdom, national studies indicate that police may be less inclined to deal informally with juveniles than with adults who have committed the same or similar offenses. Other studies show that juveniles are probably more likely to be apprehended than adults because of the types of offenses they most commonly commit and their generally lower level of experience or sophistication in criminal activity. These studies seem to indicate that the upper limits of juvenile crime may be more accurately reflected by arrest data than is true for adult crime.

We support the recommendation that consideration be given to empowering the Department of Public Safety to require uniform collection and reporting of crime data by all Alaska police agencies. Uniformity in data collection and reporting would be beneficial to the planning efforts of all criminal justice agencies and to policy makers by ensuring comparability, reliability and continuity in data. Standardization in the measurement and reporting of crime and the results of police activity would seem to be complementary to establishment of standards for the qualification and training of police personnel (recognized as an important need by the legislature in creation of the Alaska Police Standards Council.)

We could not, of course, comment definitively on the costs involved or the problems which may be encountered by individual police agencies in implementing a standardized reporting system. However, since most of Alaska's police agencies already participate in the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting system, it seems likely that implementation of a mandatory system would not be overly burdensome.

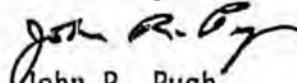
May 9, 1986

In summary, we believe that, though there are minor differences in the collection and reporting techniques among police agencies, these are insignificant in their effect on the validity of reported arrest data.

Further, we believe that the attitudes expressed in interviews with two Anchorage police officers, though they may be strongly held, are not reflective of Anchorage Police Department policy or the actual practice of the majority of Anchorage police officers as it relates to the arrest of juvenile offenders.

Most importantly, we agree with auditors that despite whatever limitations may exist in arrest data, it represents one of the best available measures of the level of criminal activity and has almost universal acceptance among social scientists and policy makers as a primary source for use in making significant public policy decisions. We also agree with auditors that empowering the Department of Public Safety to establish uniform standards for the collection and reporting of arrest data should be considered by the legislature. With standardization, reliability and validity could be increased and important public policy decisions based on arrest data could be more confidently made.

Sincerely,


John R. Pugh
Commissioner

Item 6

BILL NO: SB 23

DATE: February 1, 1989

TITLE: "An Act relating to the recording and collection of crime statistics."

CONTACT: Kenneth E. Bischoff, Director Administrative Services 465-4336

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

The Alaska Department of Public Safety collects statewide crime offense data needed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to produce its annual, national Uniform Crime Report (UCR). The Alaska UCR program uses procedures developed by the FBI. At the present time, 24 police agencies and the Alaska State Troopers participate by voluntarily submitting UCR data. This compiled data is published annually by the Department as "Crime in Alaska".

The Department supports SB 23, which would require DPS to establish a standard method of "collecting and recording law enforcement and crime statistics." If this legislation were enacted, DPS would adopt federal UCR procedures and continue reporting to the federal government on a voluntary basis. Police agencies would continue to participate in UCR voluntarily. Although SB 23 would give DPS the authority to require local law enforcement agencies to submit crime data, the Department does not intend to do so now, or in the foreseeable future. Mandatory local participation in UCR would have a fiscal impact at both the state and local levels.

Until recently, police agencies have been very cooperative in voluntarily providing their statistical information to the state and ultimately the federal UCR program. However, in this era of declining revenues, all law enforcement agencies are looking for functions that can be reduced or deleted. Further, the development of locally controlled computer systems has made it possible for certain police departments to obtain current, custom reports which make it a duplication of effort for them to separately input UCR data unless some automated or summary-based interface can be developed. Acute staff shortages in the Department's Administrative Services Division, stemming in part from the budget cuts in past years, have prevented DPS staff from following up with local police departments to develop such interfaces. DPS has only part of one position to compile UCR data, follow up problems, report to the FBI, and prepare the annual "Crime in Alaska" report.

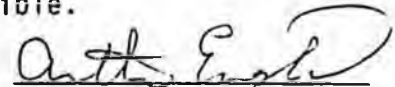
This past year three communities, Ketchikan, Dillingham and Klawock, have stopped submitting UCR data; Sitka stopped submitting UCR data as of 1987. Crimes committed in those communities will not be included in the 1988 "Crime in Alaska" report. On the plus side of the ledger, Valdez has begun UCR participation as of 1989.

Crime data is now submitted in either an incident-based format, where each offense committed during a criminal incident is reported, or a summary-based format, where only the most severe offense that occurred is reported. The larger police agencies, i.e. the Alaska State Troopers, Anchorage Police Department, and Fairbanks Police Department, use the summary-based system. The smaller agencies generally use the incident-based reporting format, but if they have computer terminals, they can input their data directly into the Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) if they chose to do so. Reports are provided to contributing agencies to summarize their crime offense data.

In response to the perceived need for several changes to UCR, the FBI recently completed a three-year study which recommended that all states adopt an incident-based reporting system. New data elements, definitions, and report designs were also recommended and adopted. Additional data would be included in the revised UCR system so that weapons, drugs, vehicles, and victim offender relationships would be entered as data elements and subsequently be available for compilation and analysis. At some point in the future, when state and local police agencies have converted to the revised UCR system, all reporting systems used to collect and report crime offense data will be standardized, nationwide. DPS has applied for federal funds to assist in the conversion of police departments to incident-based UCR; we are continuing to develop our grant application to ensure that the desired result can be achieved. Computer programming, procedural changes, and training will be required to successfully implement the conversion to the new UCR system.

SB 23 does not require local police departments to submit crime data. However, if such data is submitted, under SB 23 DPS would have to establish a standardized system and could require that crime data be provided in a standard format. In conjunction with computerization at the local level, DPS will be working more closely with police departments to develop low-cost, workable solutions to the UCR data collection problem. It is in the state's best interests to collect and compile statewide crime offense data and publish it for use by policy makers.

In summary, the DPS supports SB 23. The Department will continue to work with other law enforcement agencies in Alaska to gather crime data in Alaska in the most accurate, cost-efficient way possible.



Arthur English
Commissioner

BILL NO: SB 23

DATE: March 20, 1989

TITLE: "An Act relating to the recording and collection of crime statistics."

CONTACT: Kenneth E. Bischoff, Director Administrative Services 465-4336

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

The Alaska Department of Public Safety collects statewide crime offense data needed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to produce its annual, national Uniform Crime Report (UCR). The Alaska UCR program uses procedures developed by the FBI. At the present time, 24 police agencies and the Alaska State Troopers participate by voluntarily submitting UCR data. This compiled data is published annually by the Department as "Crime in Alaska".

The Department supports SB 23 which would require DPS to establish a standard method of "collecting and recording law enforcement and crime statistics." If this legislation were enacted, DPS would adopt federal UCR procedures and continue reporting to the federal government on a voluntary basis. Police agencies would continue to participate in UCR voluntarily. Although SB 23 would give DPS the authority to require local law enforcement agencies to submit crime data, the Department does not intend to do so now, or in the foreseeable future. Mandatory local participation in UCR would have a fiscal impact at both the state and local levels.

Until recently, police agencies have been very cooperative in voluntarily providing their statistical information to the state and ultimately the federal UCR program. However, in this era of declining revenues, all law enforcement agencies are looking for functions that can be reduced or deleted. Further, the development of locally controlled computer systems has made it possible for certain police departments to obtain current, custom reports which make it a duplication of effort for them to separately input UCR data unless some automated or summary-based interface can be developed. Acute staff shortages in the Department's Administrative Services Division, stemming in part from the budget cuts in past years, have prevented DPS staff from following up with local police departments to develop such interfaces. DPS has only part of one position to compile UCR data, follow up problems, report to the FBI, and prepare the annual "Crime in Alaska" report.

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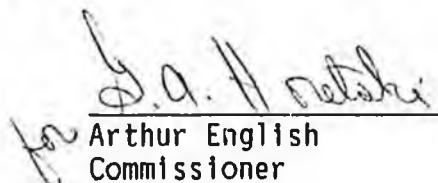
In response to the perceived need for several changes to UCR, the FBI recently completed a three-year study which recommended that all states adopt an incident-based reporting system. Adoption of the new standard would require the collection of additional data elements covering victim/offender relationships, drugs, weapons, and vehicles. These new data elements would make enhanced analysis of crime data possible.

At this time the Department has determined that the existing UCR program needs to be consolidated and strengthened before considering adoption of the new standard. The existing UCR system will still be supported by the FBI for the foreseeable future.

Any future decision to adopt the incident-based standard should take into account the input of the participating agencies. At the March 1989 meeting of the Alaska Chiefs of Police Association a dialog was begun with the chiefs of local departments on means of reducing the impact of UCR data collection on the contributors, and ways of encouraging voluntary participation in the UCR program.

SB 23 does not require local police departments to submit crime data. However, under SB 23, DPS must establish a standardized system and could require that crime data be provided in a standard format. In conjunction with computerization at the local level, DPS will be working more closely with police departments to develop low-cost, workable solutions to the UCR data collection problem. It is in the state's best interests to collect and compile statewide crime offense data and publish it for use by policy makers.

In summary, the DPS supports SB 23. The Department will continue to work with other law enforcement agencies in Alaska to gather crime data in Alaska in the most accurate, cost-efficient way possible.


for Arthur English
Commissioner