Growing rates of youth incarceration during the 1980s and 1990s
- Flawed predictions of teenage male “superpredators”
- Skepticism about rehabilitation
- Greater reliance on transfer to adult court, boot camps, and get-tough policies and programs
- Construction of more youth correctional facilities
- 50% increase in the number of youth in custody from 1983 to 1997
Context for Reform: The 2000s

• What happened?
  – Exposure of faulty methodology underlying studies predicting rise of “superpredators”
  – Declining juvenile arrest rates (33% decline from 1996 to 2008)
  – New research:
    • Ineffectiveness of large correctional facilities
    • Transfer to the adult system increases recidivism
    • Adolescent brain research
    • Effectiveness of community-based programs
  – Litigation over abuses in institutions
  – Fiscal challenges
Why does this context matter?

• The legacy of the 1980s and 1990s, a broken system with ineffective programs and practices, persists in many counties and states.

• There are many ongoing efforts to align what we do with what we know is best using a variety of strategies.

• In spite of recent progress, there is much more to be done, and we are not immune from reverting back to past practices.

© Steve Liss
Insider Reform Strategies

**JUVENILE DETENTION ALTERNATIVES INITIATIVE**

- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Over 200 counties in 39 states and the District of Columbia
- Data-driven initiative focused on reducing unnecessary use of detention using eight interrelated “core strategies”

**ModelsforChange**

- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- 17 states, including 4 “core states” and other “Action Networks” focused on specific issues: racial and ethnic disparities, mental health, indigent defense
Outsider Reform Strategies: National, Issue-Based, and State-Based Advocacy
Reinvestment and Realignment

**Shift from juvenile justice systems that:**
Focus solely on sanctions and control
Rely on large institutions and out-of-home placements
Do not consider the needs and importance of family members

**to**

**Juvenile justice systems that:**
Build upon strengths and reward success
Promote and support community-based services
Value family members and include them in rehabilitation
Conditions of Confinement
Outsider Reform Strategies: Litigation

**FIGURE 8**

**IMPACT OF LITIGATION ON COSTS OF JUVENILE CONFINEMENT IN CALIFORNIA**

- **1996**: $36,118
- **1997**: $39,425
- **1998**: $40,528
- **1999**: $43,565
- **2000**: $49,111
- **2001**: $56,247
- **2002**: $63,961
- **2003**: $83,233
- **2004**: $92,545
- **2005**: $115,000
- **2006**: $178,000
- **2007**: $218,000
- **2008**: $252,000

*State signs consent decree to resolve lawsuit over conditions of confinement.*

*Source: Juvenile Justice Reform: Realigning Responsibilities, Little Hoover Commission, 2008.*