

Disproportionate Minority Contact in Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System



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Presentation to the Latino and
Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

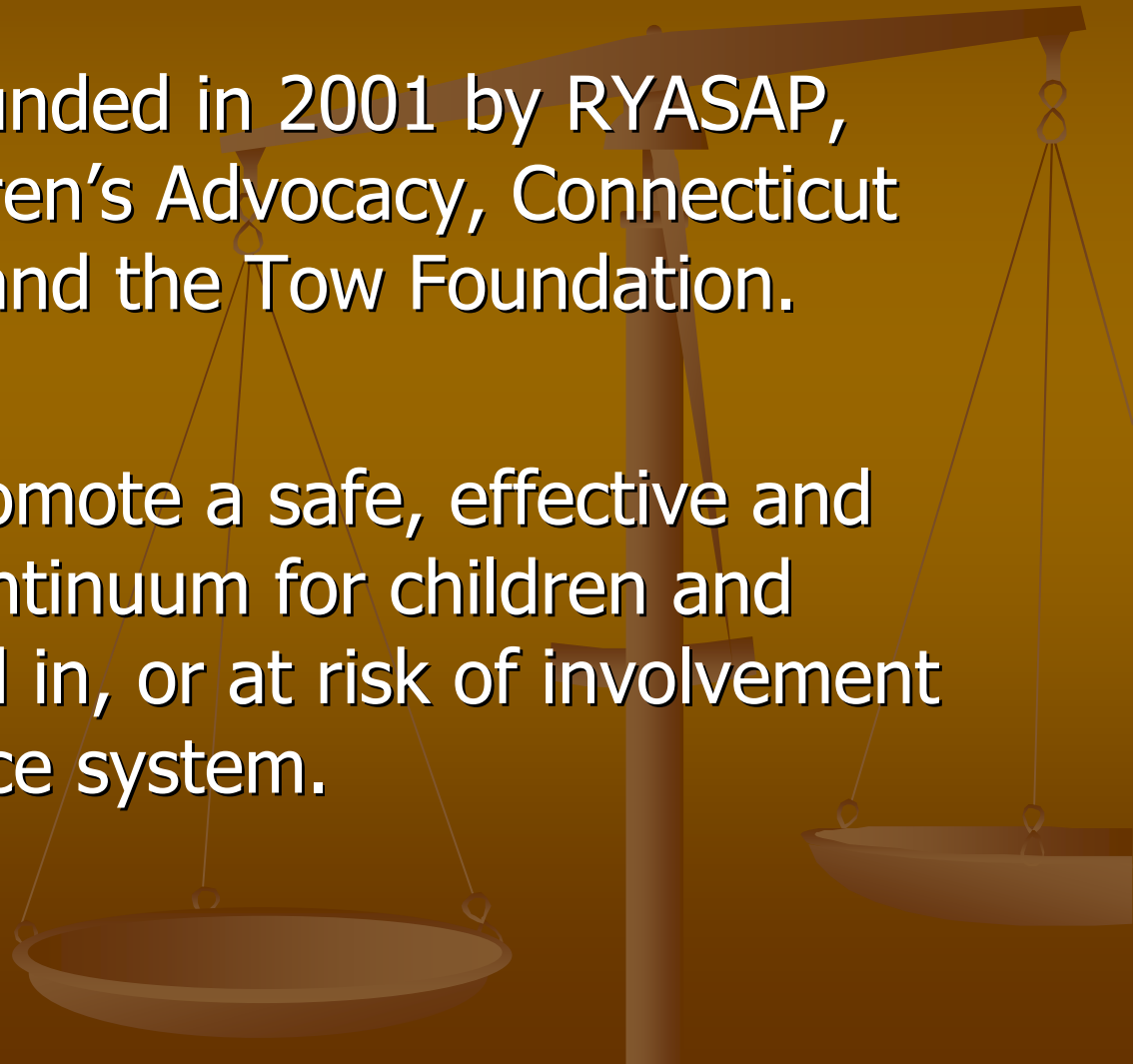
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About the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

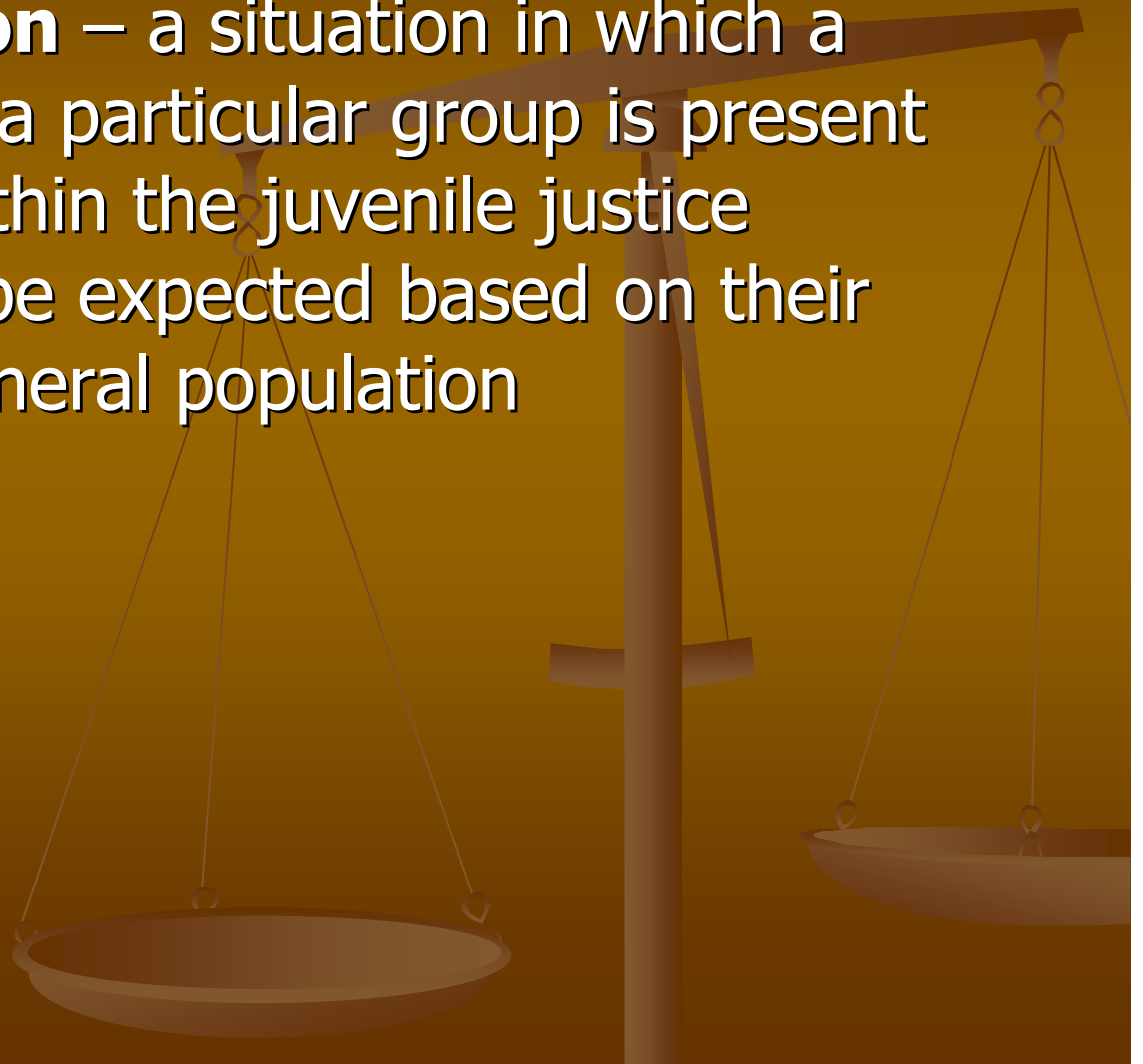
The Alliance was founded in 2001 by RYASAP, the Center for Children's Advocacy, Connecticut Voices for Children and the Tow Foundation.

Our mission is to promote a safe, effective and equitable service continuum for children and adolescents involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the juvenile justice system.

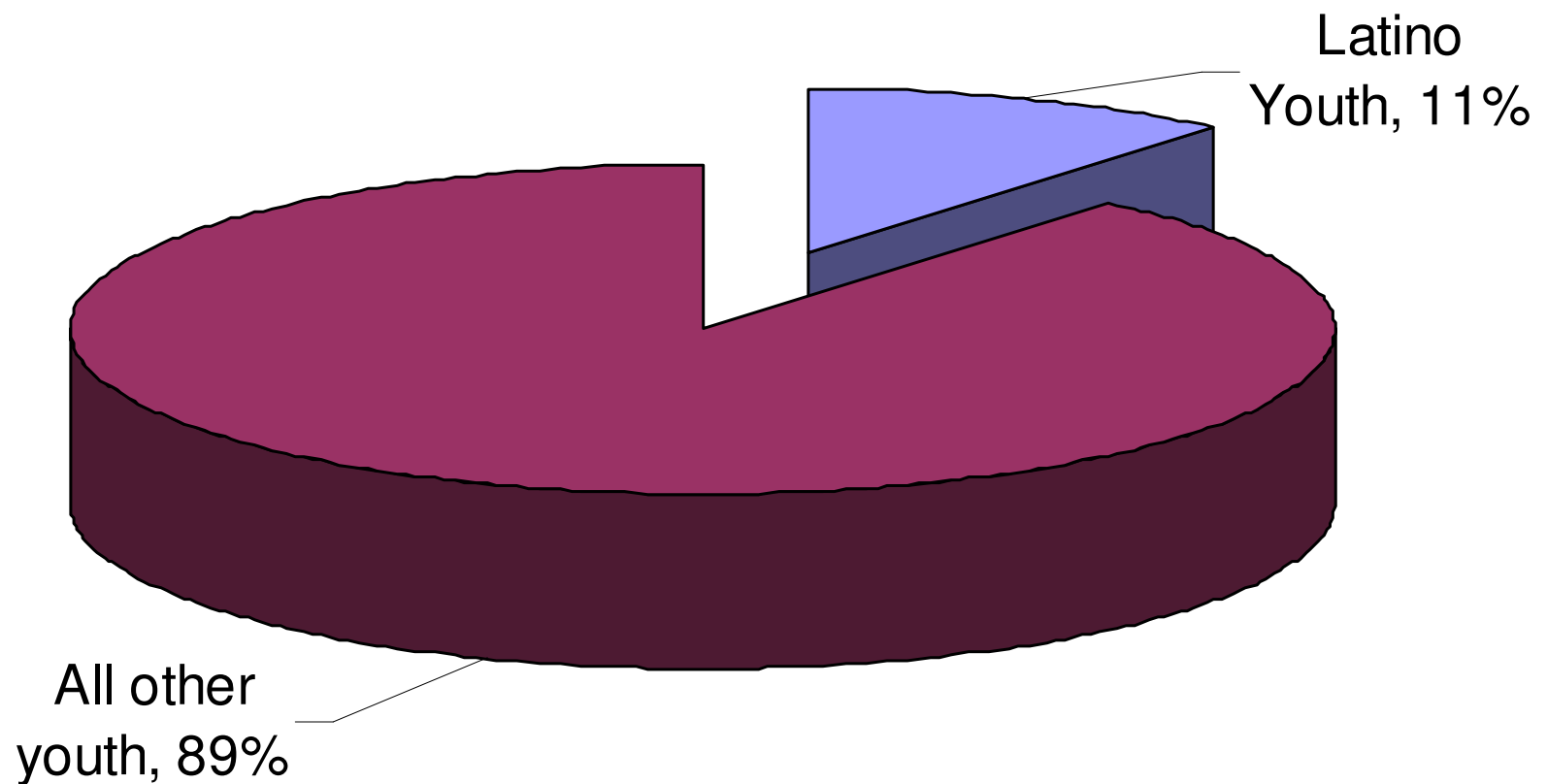


Disproportionate Minority Contact

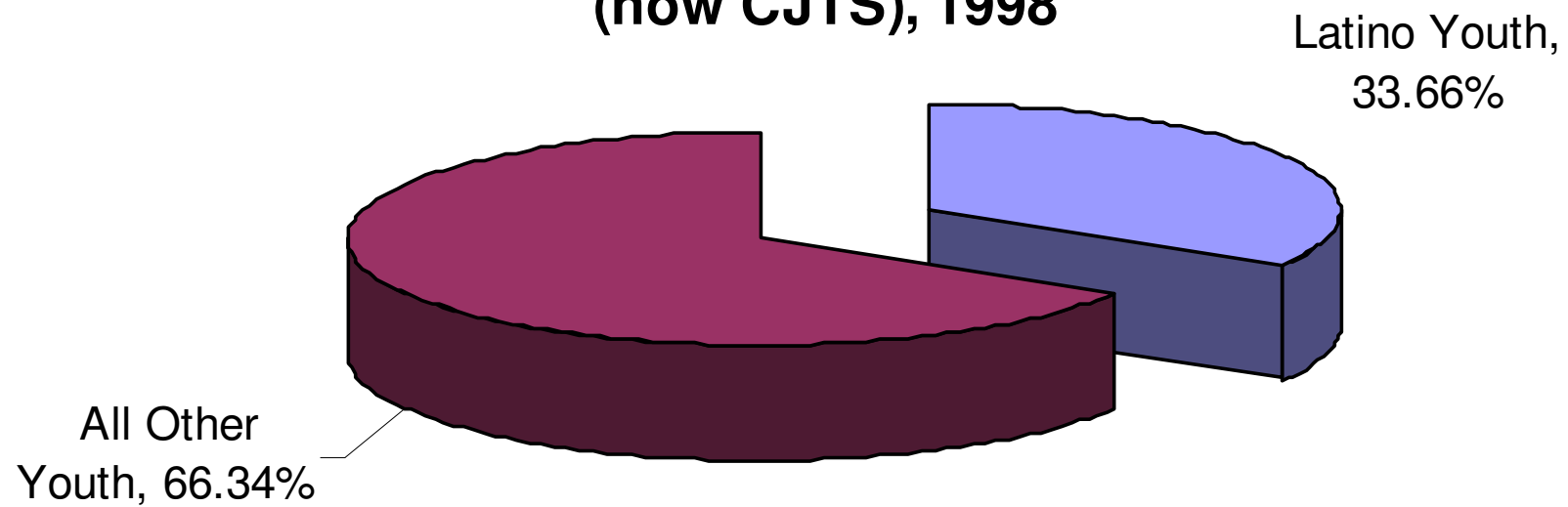
Overrepresentation – a situation in which a larger proportion of a particular group is present at various stages within the juvenile justice system than would be expected based on their proportion in the general population



Connecticut Youth Population, 1998



Connecticut Youth Placed in Long Lane School (now CJTS), 1998



Assessing and Addressing DMC

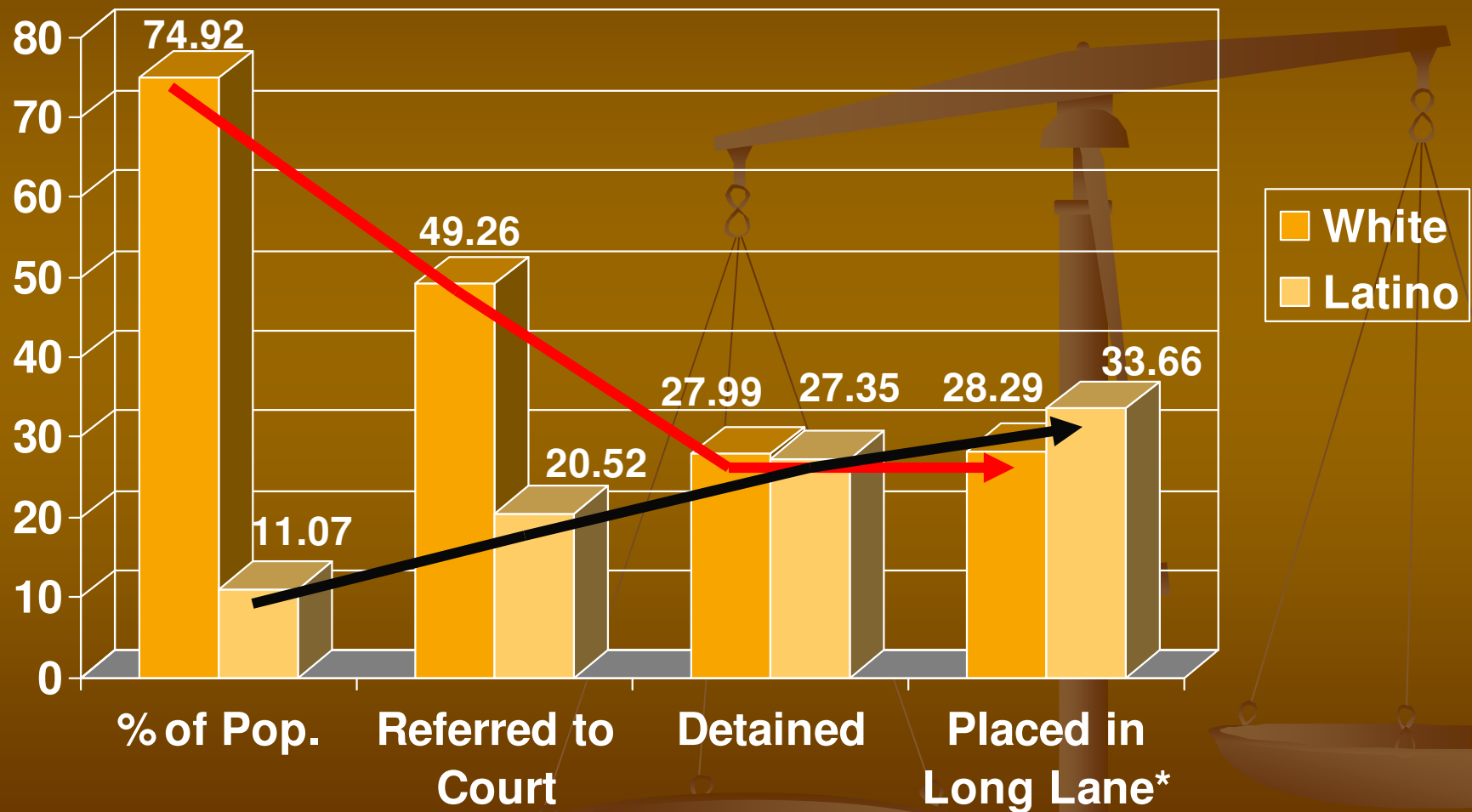
- The Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) directs states to attempt to reduce DMC by identifying the extent of overrepresentation, assessing the data, and developing and **implementing** strategies to diminish overrepresentation
- The state of Connecticut has twice contracted with Spectrum Associates to assess the extent of overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system – The most recent report was entitled, “A Reassessment of Minority Overrepresentation in Connecticut’s Juvenile Justice System” (July 2001)

Extent of Overrepresentation

- “Black and Latino Juveniles are clearly overrepresented at each decision point in the juvenile justice system, and the extent of the overrepresentation increases as juveniles moved from court referral to confinement.” – Spectrum Associates, 2001 Report on Overrepresentation in Connecticut
- Between 1983 and 1991, the percentage of Latino/a youth in public detention centers in the U.S. increased by 84%, compared to an 8% increase for White youth and 46% increase for youth overall.*

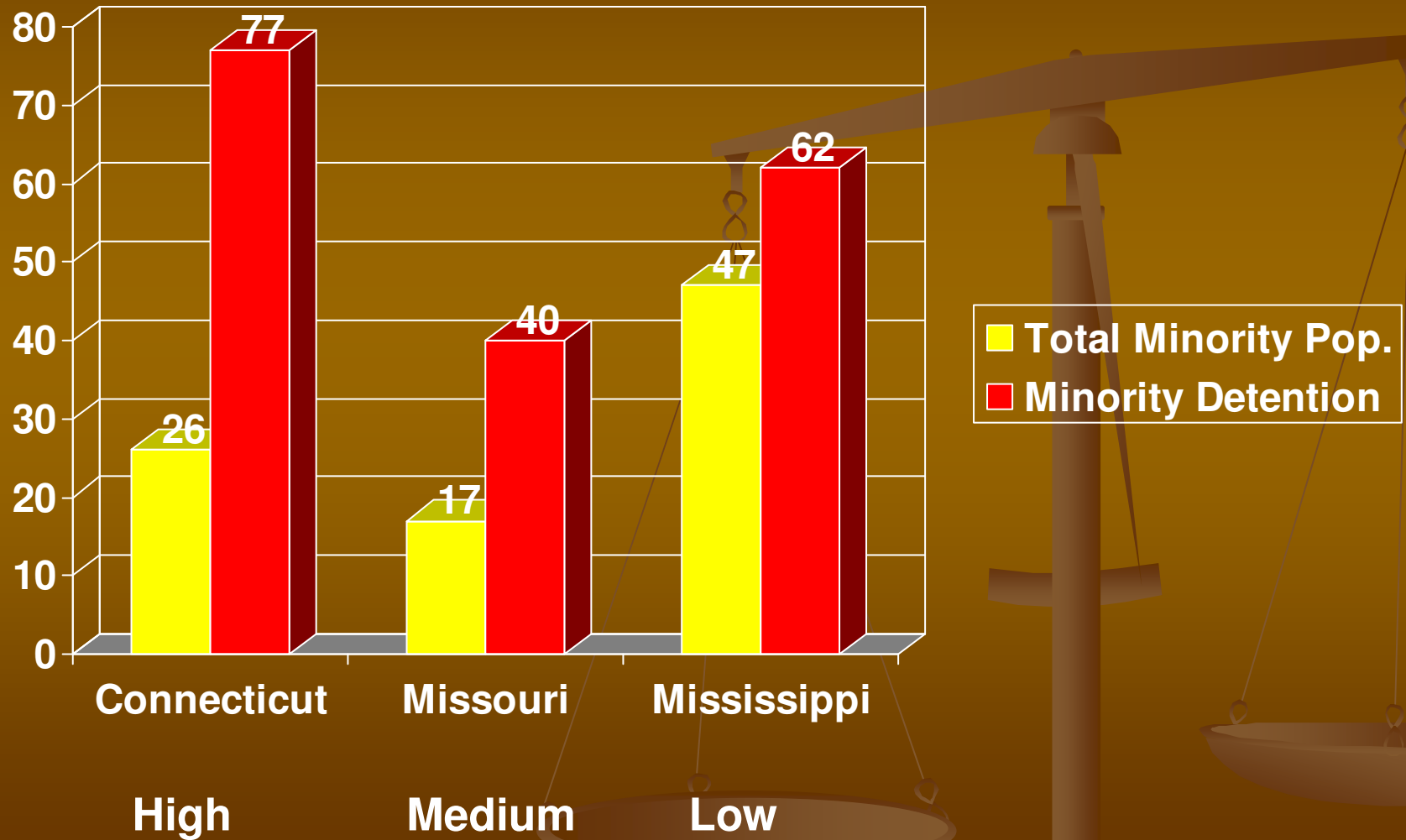
Source: Donde esta la justicia? Building Blocks for Youth. July 2002.

Extent of Overrepresentation in Connecticut



* Now the Connecticut Juvenile Training School.

Levels of Disproportionality



Latino/a Youth in Pre-Trial Detention in the U.S.

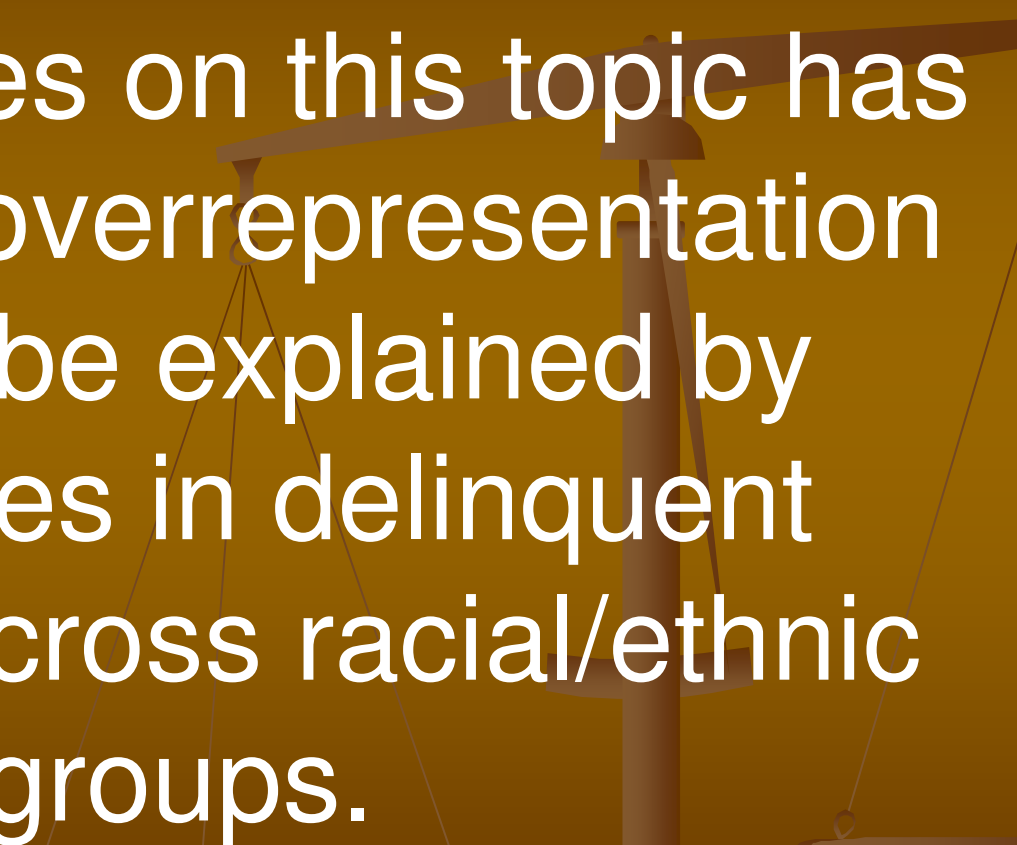
- Human Rights Watch reported that Latino/a youth were overrepresented in 39 states in 2002
- An Index of 1.0 means that Latino/a youth are represented at the same rate as their proportion in the general population.
- Indexes of greater than 1.0 mean that there is overrepresentation in that system.

State	Index
1. Michigan	7.2
2. South Dakota	7.1
3. North Dakota	6.7
4. Vermont	5.9
5. Pennsylvania	4.5
6. Connecticut	3.8
7. West Virginia	3.4
8. Wisconsin	3.1

Incarceration of Latino/a Youth Under Age 18 in the U.S.

State	Index of Overrepresentation
1. New Hampshire	17.5
2. Connecticut	10.9
3. Massachusetts	8.8
4. Hawaii	7.6
5. Pennsylvania	5.9
6. New Jersey	5.7
7. Iowa	5.4
8. Delaware	4.6
9. Vermont	4.5
10. Montana	4.3

Research conducted across the United States on this topic has found that overrepresentation can not be explained by differences in delinquent behavior across racial/ethnic groups.



Overview of Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System

Initial Contact

1. Issue a warning and release the juvenile.

2. Confer with parents and release the juvenile.

3. Make a referral to a community-based organization.

4. Make a referral to formal diversion services, where available (JRB, YSB, etc.).

5. **MAKE AN ARREST.**

Decision-Making Points in the Juvenile Justice System



Decision Makers in JJ System

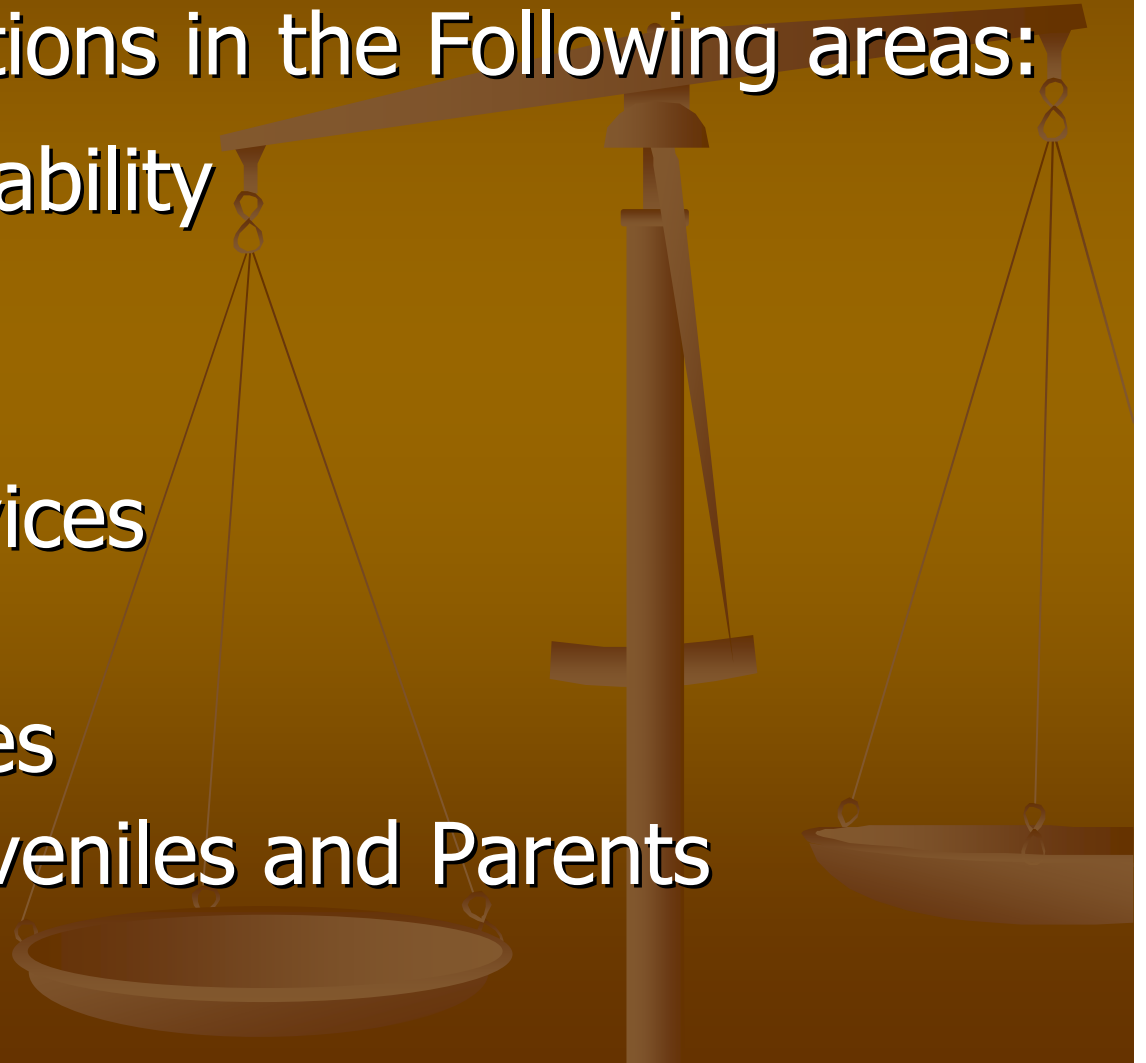
- Police
- Probation Officers
- Juvenile Prosecutors
- Judges
- Department of Children and Families



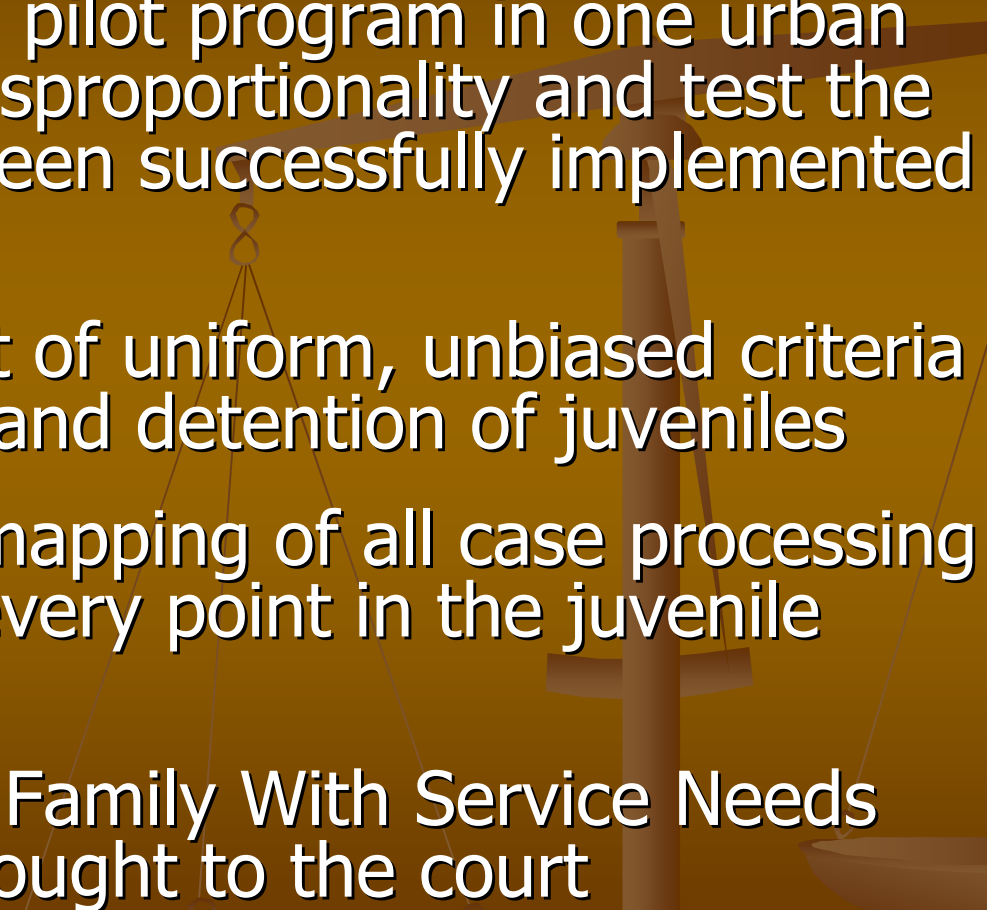
JJAC Recommendations from the Spectrum Associates Report

17 Recommendations in the Following areas:

- Overall Accountability
- Police
- Detention
- Residential Services
- Personnel
- Program Services
- Empowering Juveniles and Parents



The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance Supports:

1. The creation of a pilot program in one urban area to reduce disproportionality and test the model that has been successfully implemented in other states
 2. The development of uniform, unbiased criteria regarding arrest and detention of juveniles
 3. Comprehensive mapping of all case processing decisions along every point in the juvenile justice system
 4. The reduction of Family With Service Needs (FWSN) cases brought to the court
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Community Mapping as a Tool

Haywood Burns Institute Model

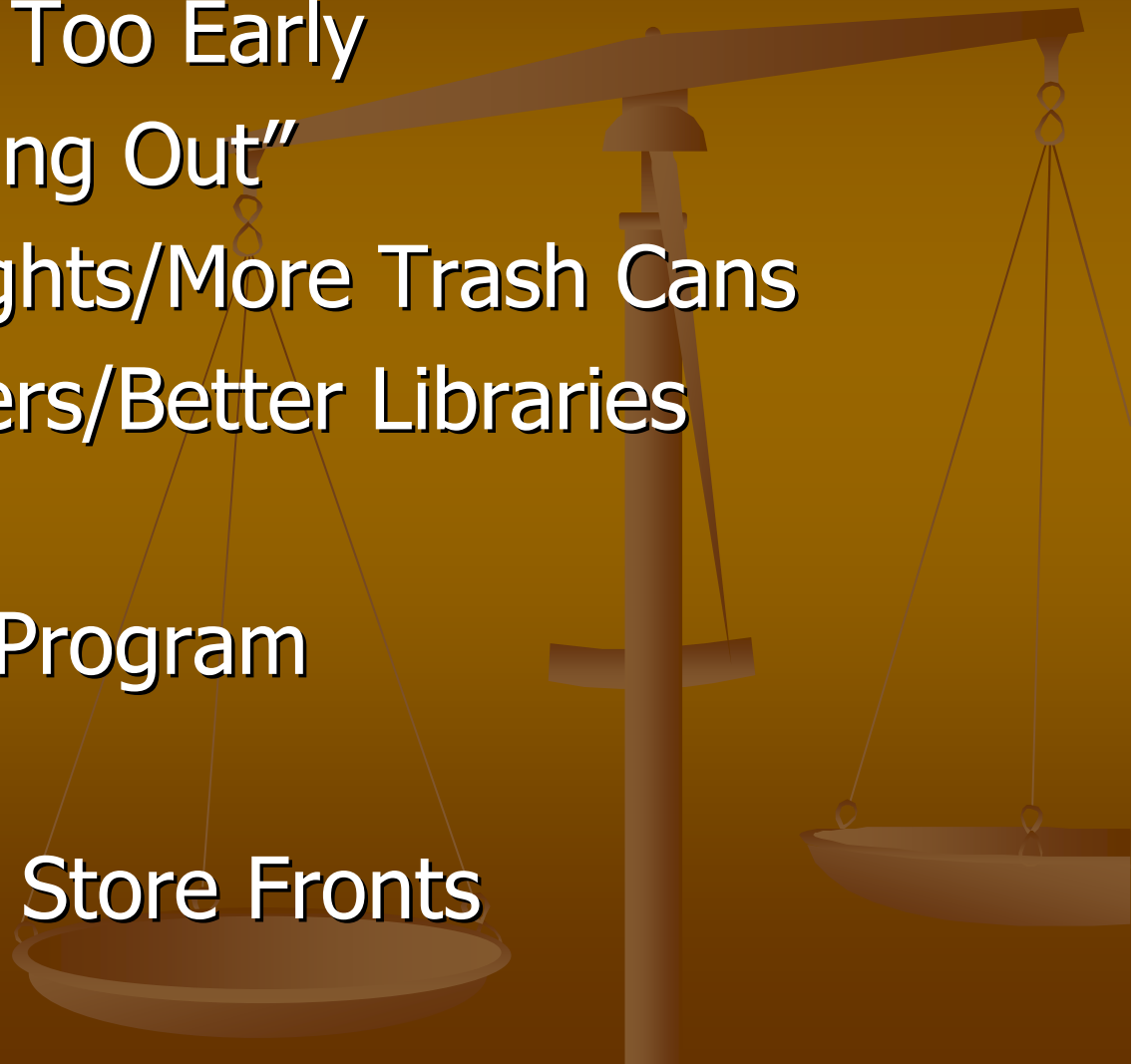
Three Key Phases:

- Deployment and Arrest
- Detention
- Disposition

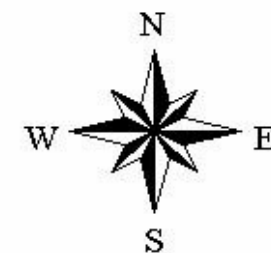


Seattle Mapping by Burns Inst.





- Programs Close Too Early
- “Nowhere to Hang Out”
- Better Street Lights/More Trash Cans
- Computer Centers/Better Libraries
- ESL Courses
- Young Father’s Program
- Teen Shelter
- Remodel Empty Store Fronts

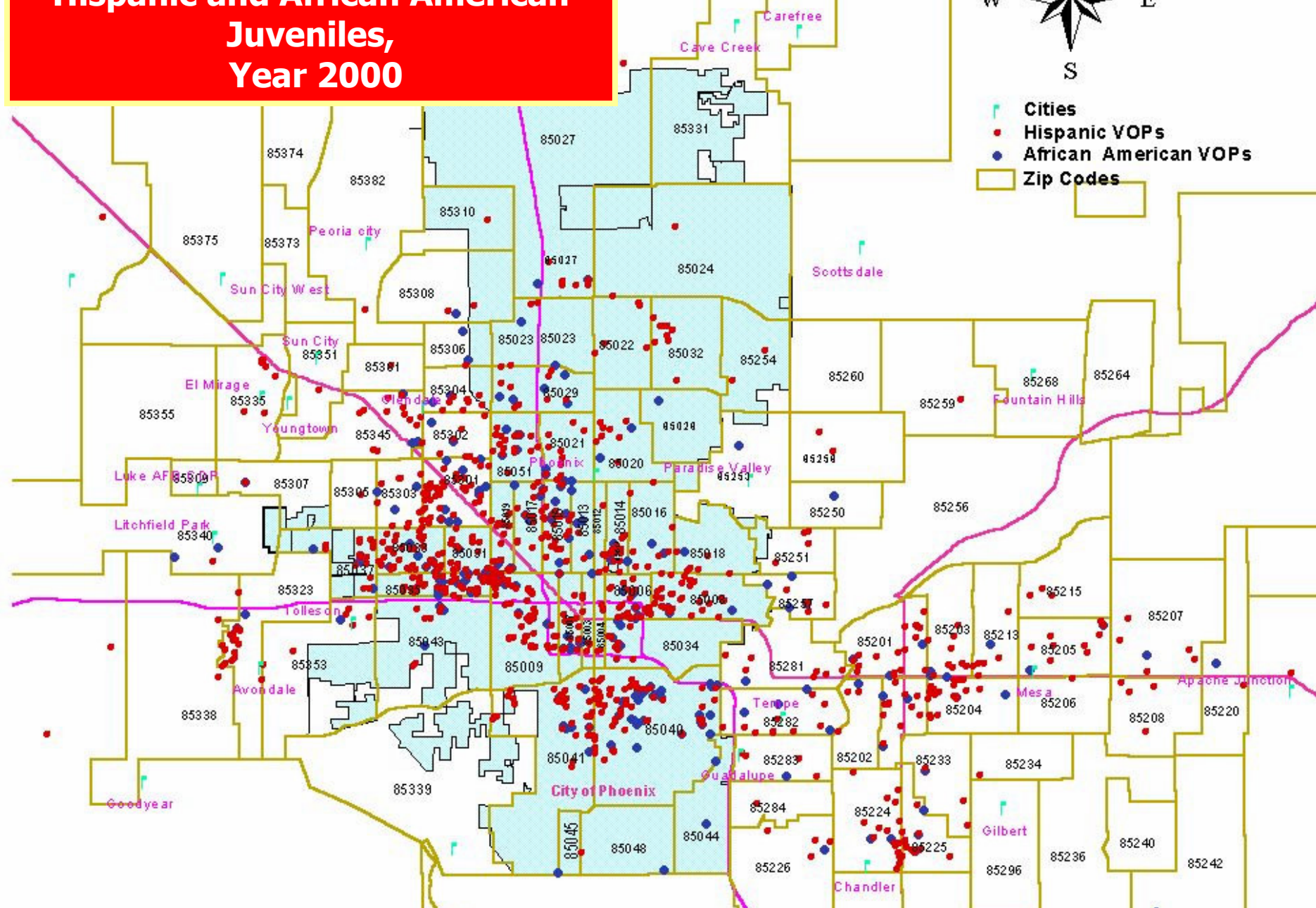


Violation of Probation for Hispanic and African American Juveniles, Year 2000



Map 8

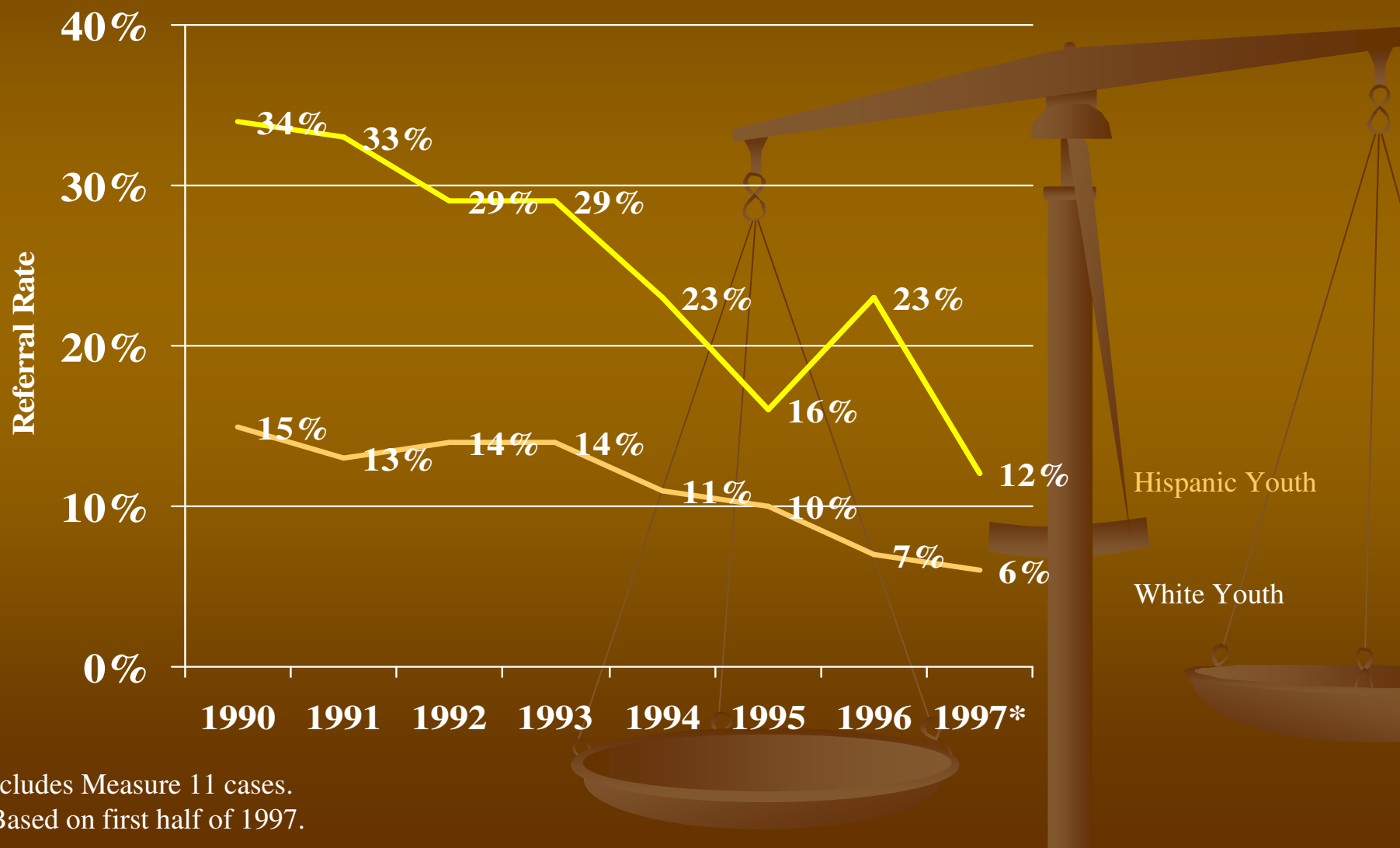
-  Cities
-  Hispanic VOPs
-  African American VOPs
-  Zip Codes



Multnomah County (Seattle)

Proportion of Delinquency Referrals with Pretrial Detention¹

By Year and Race/Ethnicity of Juvenile



Addressing DMC in Connecticut

- Educate the public about the implications of this problem – both civil rights issues and funding implications
- Implement the recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
- Test the Haywood Burns model in one Connecticut city
- Gather the political will to pass legislation addressing this issue

