ILLINOIS
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
INFORMATION AUTHORITY

On Good Authority

Vol. 6, No. 5
December 2002

On Good Authority is a periodic briefing on trends and issues in criminal justice research and program evaluation. This report was written by staff Research Analyst Timothy Lavery. It is a summary of an implementation evaluation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Provisions of 1998 conducted by the Authority for the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission. Copies of the evaluation are available from the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

The **Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority** is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice in Illinois. The basic functions of the Authority are criminal justice research, federal and state grants administration, and information systems development and support.

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The evaluation was supported by contract #98JEFX0017 awarded to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) for the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission (IJJC) by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and by contract #01IG0000257 awarded to the Authority by IDHS and IJJC. Points of view in this document do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of IDHS, IJJC, or OJJDP.

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois, December 2002. Printing order #03-104; 6,500 copies.

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Extended jurisdiction juvenile prosecutions in Illinois

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The 1990s were marked with concerns over increasing numbers of serious juvenile offenses. To address these concerns, the governor and General Assembly passed the Juvenile Justice Reform Provisions of 1998 (P.A. 90-590). The reform provisions added a component to the Illinois Juvenile Court Act that targets violent and habitual juvenile offenders (705 ILCS 405/5-801 to 705 ILCS 405/5-820).

The new component begins with a legislative declaration that acknowledges the existence of a small subset of violent and habitual juvenile offenders who, for the sake of community safety, should be treated differently than other juvenile offenders. It describes pre-existing provisions for transferring minors from juvenile court to adult court.

The component also includes a provision that allows state's attorneys to petition the court for extended jurisdiction juvenile (EJJ) prosecution if there is probable cause to believe that a minor at least 13 years old has committed an offense that would be considered a felony if committed by an adult. Minors who are found guilty in EJJ prosecutions receive both a juvenile sentence and an adult sentence. The adult sentence is stayed and not imposed unless the offender violates the conditions of the juvenile sentence. EJJ prosecutions are intended to provide minors who have committed serious offenses with a last chance to avoid adult sanctions. At the same time, the potential of an adult sentence is intended to serve as a deterrent to future criminal activity.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority recently completed an implementation evaluation of the reform provisions. This *On Good Authority* summarizes results from the evaluation pertaining to EJJ prosecutions.

Evaluation methodology

In the evaluation, state's attorneys or assistant state's attorneys who prosecute juvenile cases, public defenders who defend juvenile cases, and juvenile court judges for each Illinois county were asked to complete a survey that included several questions on EJJ. Survey respondents (76 prosecutors, 51 public defenders, and 85 juvenile court judges) answered questions about their participation in and opinions of EJJ prosecutions. Surveys were administered during the spring and summer of 2000.

The evaluation also included a case study describing an EJJ prosecution, including interviews with those involved in the case. Information pertaining to the case also was obtained during the spring and summer of 2000.