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RESEARCHERS EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE JUVENILE COURT VERSUS ADULT COURT FOR YOUNG ADULT OFFENDERS

TALLAHASSEE, FLA—In a recent study published in *Criminology & Public Policy* (CPP) [Volume 11, Issue 4], researchers report that processing young adult offenders between the ages of 18 and 24 years old in the adult court system rather than the juvenile court system results in more offending.

Professor David Farrington of Cambridge University, Professor Rolf Loeber of the University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. James C. Howell of the Comprehensive Strategy Group, report that most young offenders will naturally stop offending in their early 20s. However, those juveniles who have been processed by the adult court and sent to an adult prison are much more likely to continue offending than those who were not dealt with by the adult system. The authors conclude that young adult offenders should be handled in specially designated courts that focus on rehabilitation and reentry and kept out of the adult system.

Policy Essay author Professor Elizabeth Cauffman of the University of California at Irvine is in agreement with the findings from Farrington and his colleagues. However, she notes that any policy change that would increase the age of maturity beyond 18 will mean little if prosecutors continue to transfer, try, and sentence juveniles as adults. Policy Essay authors Professors Chris Gibson and Marvin Krohn of the University of Florida are not yet convinced that enough research has been conducted on juvenile culpability and caution against an immediate widespread policy change that would allow offenders under the age of 24 to be handled by the juvenile court system.