



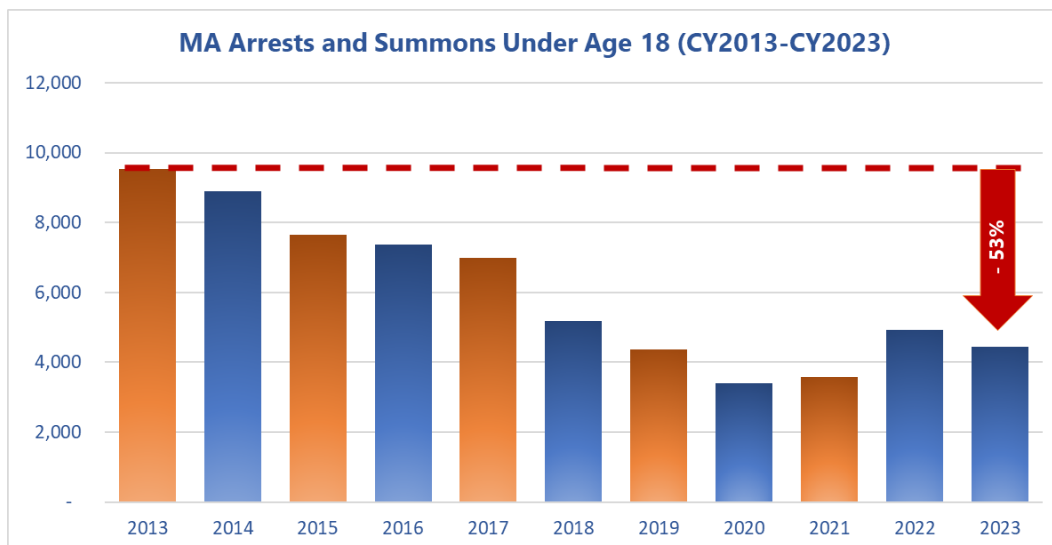
# Can the Juvenile Justice System Handle Gradually Raising the Age to Include 18- to 20-Year-Olds?

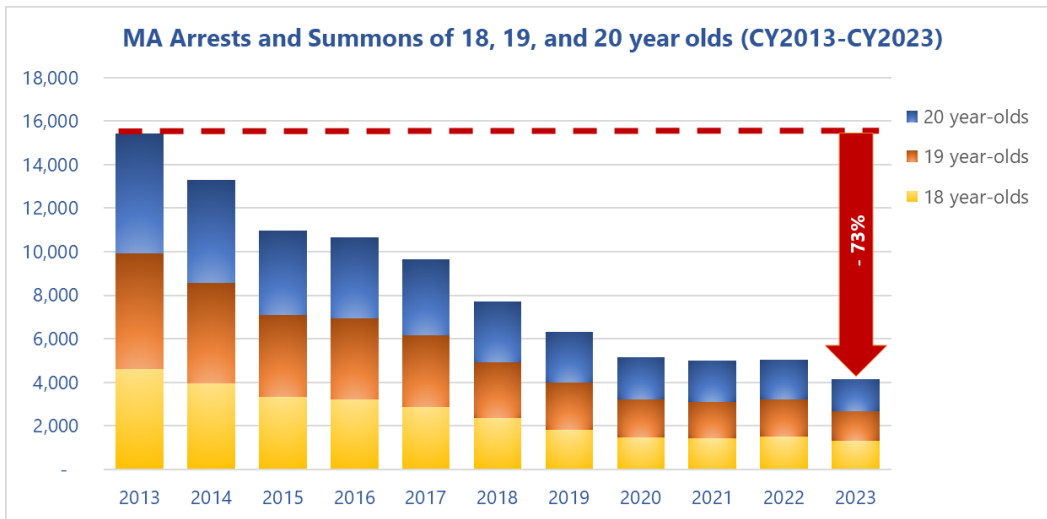
Updated January 2024

Massachusetts' juvenile justice caseload data illustrate the declines in rates of crime among youth in Massachusetts over the past decade, coupled with the successful implementation of the 2013 Raise the Age law to include 17-year-olds and the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform Act which heavily invested in the prevention of young people's legal system involvement. Not only can the juvenile system absorb this new cohort of youth, the system also has the expertise, policy and programmatic infrastructure to effectively intervene with these older adolescents. This is the case despite the decline and subsequent rise in offenses since the start of the coronavirus pandemic that we believe is largely driven by the ongoing mental health impact of the trauma, isolation, depression and anxiety young people faced during pandemic shutdowns.

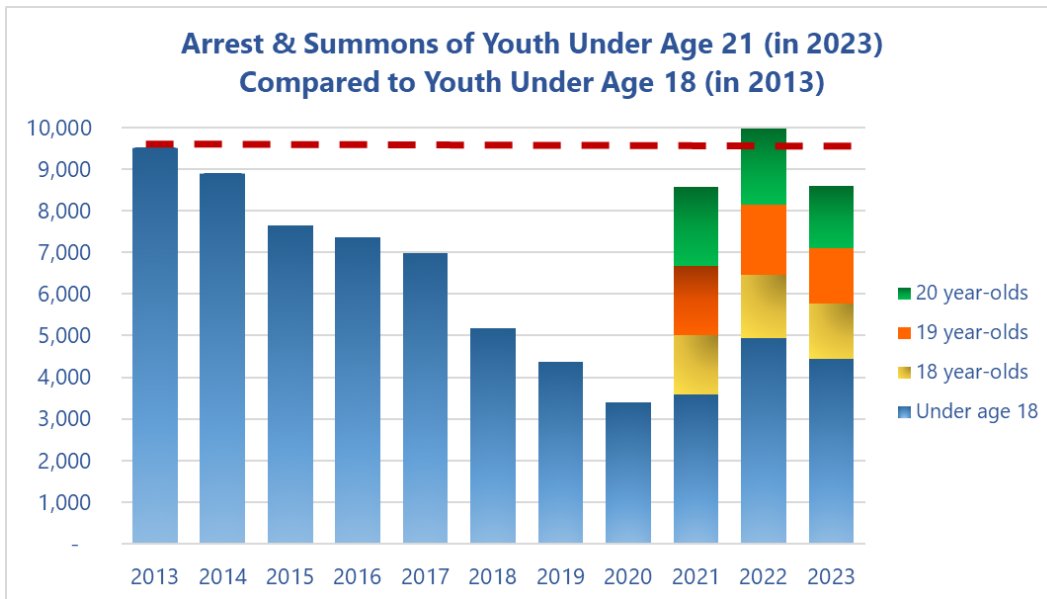
## ARRESTS AND SUMMONS: THE FRONT DOOR OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Since raising the age in September of 2013, Massachusetts has seen a 53% reduction in juvenile arrests, and a 73% drop in the arrest rates of 18- to 20-year-olds:





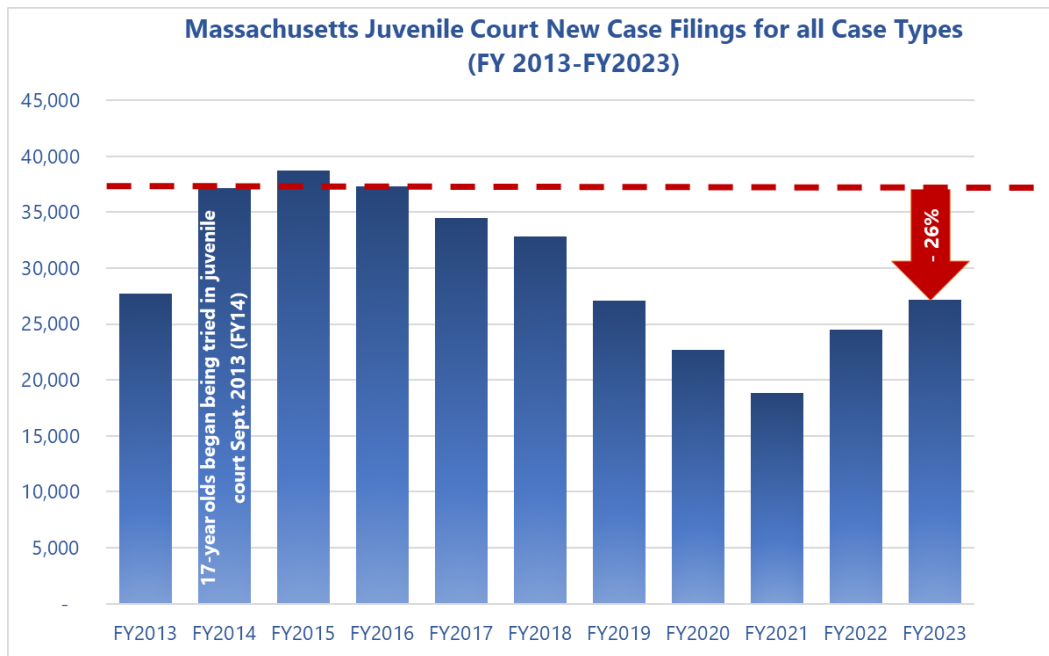
In fact, there were fewer young people under age 21 arrested in 2023 than all youth under age 18 who were arrested in 2013.



Data Source: *Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, [Crime Statistics](#)*

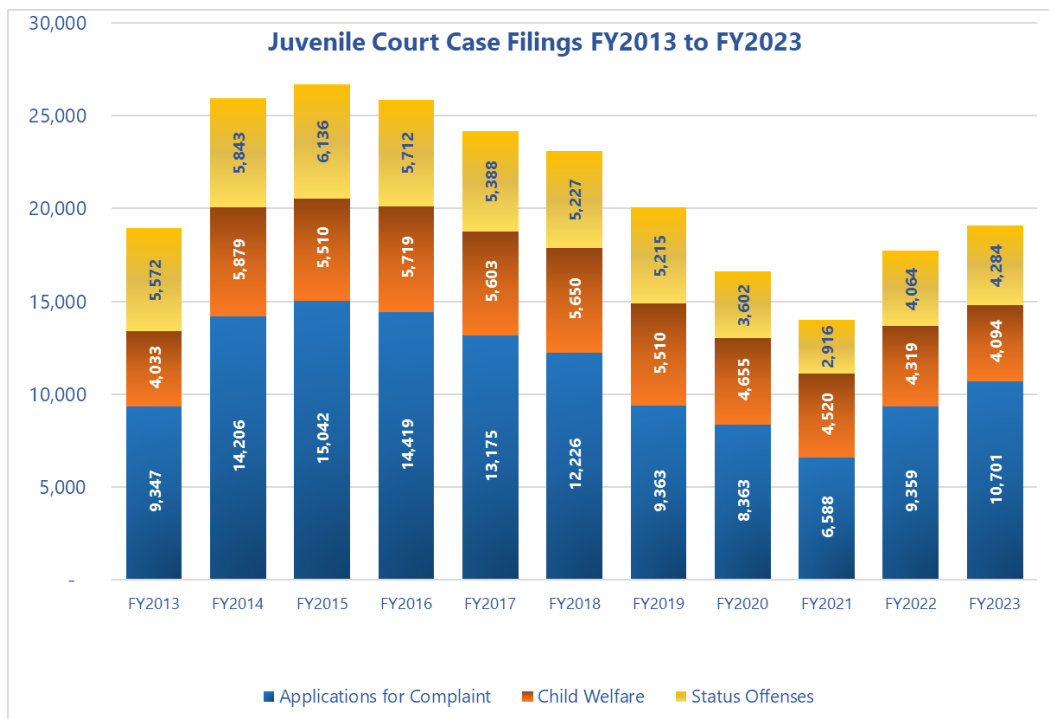
## JUVENILE COURT CASELOADS

The Juvenile Court’s filings, for all case types (child welfare, Child Requiring Assistance, adoption, delinquency, etc.), have declined by 26%, since 17-year-olds began to be tried in Juvenile Court.

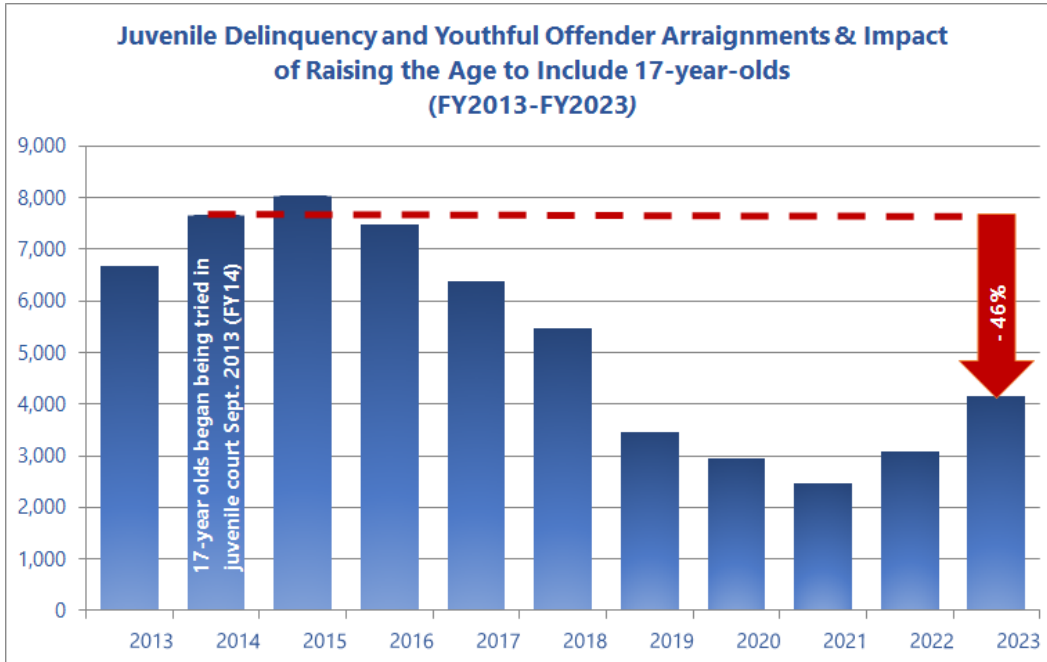


Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court, [Court Data, Metrics & Reports](#)

In FY2023, child welfare filings continued to drop, while Child Requiring Assistance filings returned to pre-Pandemic levels. Delinquency filings increased mostly driven by an increase in court filings for misdemeanor and low level offenses.



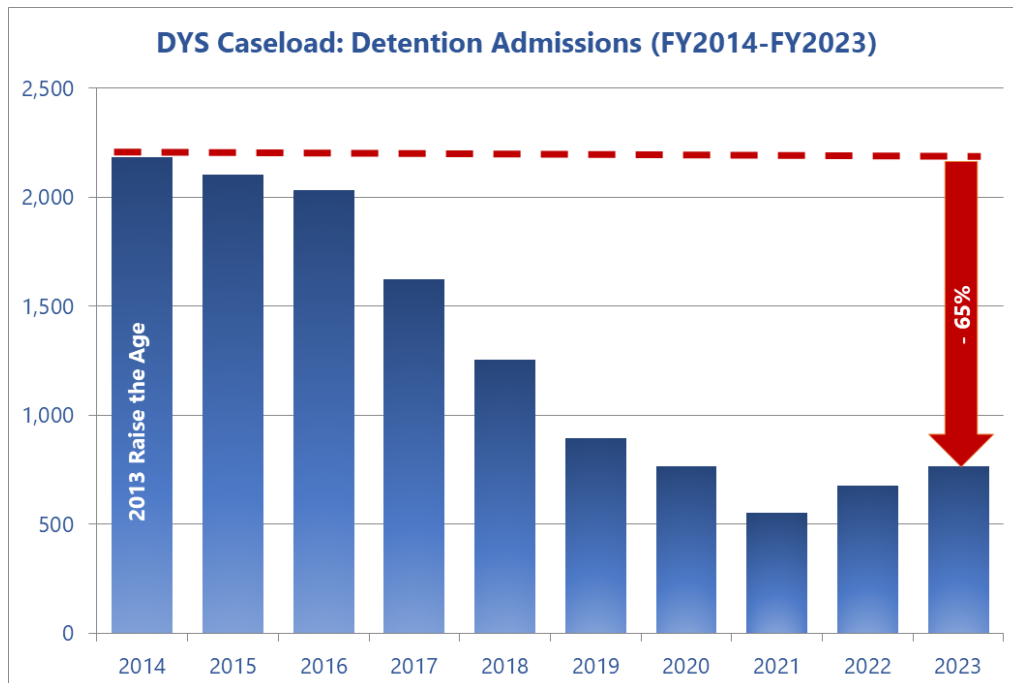
The Juvenile Court has fewer Delinquency and Youthful Offender cases arraigned today than prior to the inclusion of 17-year-olds, having declined by 46%.

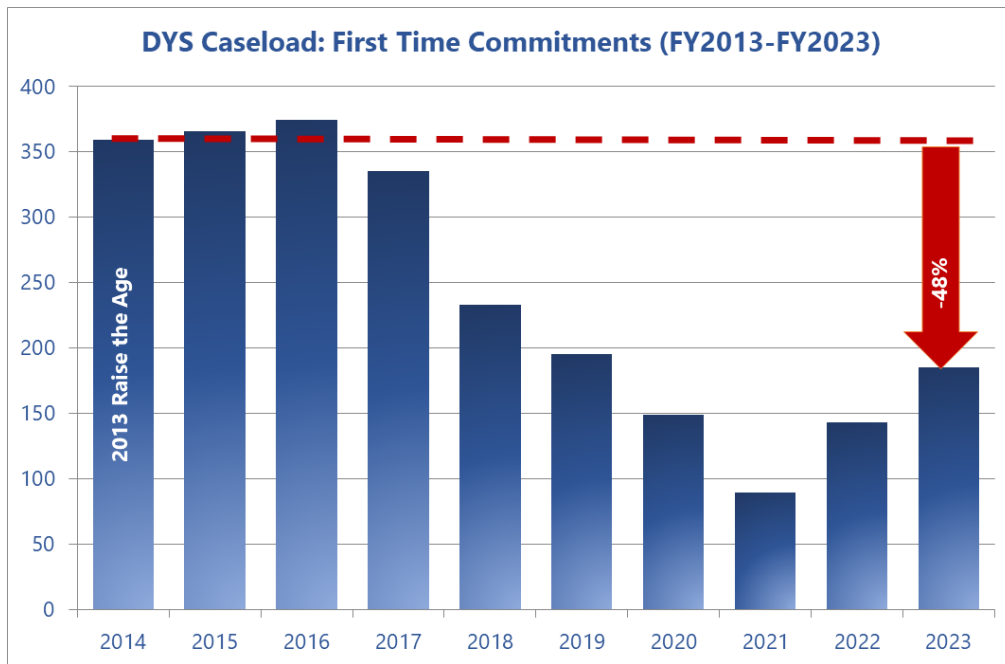


Data Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of the Trial Court communications, Nov 2019 and Massachusetts Trial Court, Department of Research and Planning [arraignment dashboard](#)

## DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES CASELOADS

DYS detention admissions dropped by 65% and DYS commitments dropped by 48% since raising the age in September 2013.





Data Source: *Massachusetts Department of Youth Services [annual reports](#) and Juvenile Justice Policy and Data Board data [dashboard](#) and [annual reports](#)*



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