

HB 213 / SB 196: Relating to Juvenile Justice Diversion Programs

Florida's youth do not belong in adult court.

What is the purpose of HB 213 / SB 196?

- ▶ HB 213 / SB 196 requires the establishment of civil citation or similar diversion programs for juveniles, etc. to provide an efficient and innovative alternative to custody by the department for juveniles who commit non-serious delinquent acts and to ensure swift and appropriate consequences.
- ▶ The civil citation or similar diversion program shall be established in each county and at least one of the programs must be run by the county.
- ▶ The types of crimes for which children can be sentenced as adults would be limited to the more major violent offenses.

Why is HB 213 / SB 196 necessary?

- ▶ Over 60% of the more than 12,000 juvenile suspects moved to the adult court system in the past 5 years were charged with nonviolent felonies.
- ▶ Children as young as 12 have been tried as adults and in most cases do not understand adult court proceedings. Compounding this is the fact that their parents are not allowed to participate.
- ▶ An adult felony conviction brands a child for life, diminishing opportunities for education and future employment. Additionally, children convicted in adult court are more likely to reoffend because there's no education, rehabilitation services or treatment provided.
- ▶ Minorities account for more than 60% of children arrested in Florida, but 76% of those sent to adult court.
- ▶ For Fiscal Year 2015-16, 19,386 juveniles were eligible for a civil citation, and only 9,636 eligible juveniles were issued a civil citation. The recidivism rate for the juveniles who completed a civil citation program in Fiscal Year 2014-15 was 3.8 percent.

How would HB 213 / SB 196 work?

- ▶ Under HB 213 / SB 196, a law enforcement officer is to issue a civil citation or require the juvenile's participation in a similar diversion program when the juvenile admits to committing specific first-time misdemeanor offenses.
- ▶ A law enforcement officer must provide written documentation articulating why an arrest is warranted when he or she has the discretion to issue a civil citation but instead chooses to arrest the juvenile.