

DJJ Closure & Less Restrictive Programs: Gaps in Oversight are Putting Youth and Communities at Risk



What Changed?

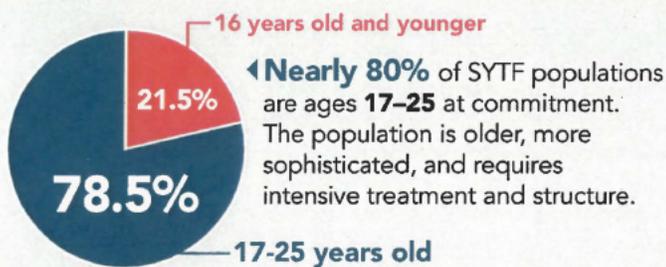
The rapid closure of the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) shifted responsibility for California's most serious and high-risk youth (up to age 25) to county probation departments. Under this shift, Less Restrictive Programs (LRPs) were created to allow young adults to complete the final portion of their baseline detention term, including in community settings, after demonstrated rehabilitation progress.

While the closure of DJJ created new opportunities for rehabilitation, LRPs were implemented without consistent statewide standards, licensing requirements, or oversight safeguards. **This lack of oversight risks youth safety, community protection, and the integrity of long-term outcomes.**

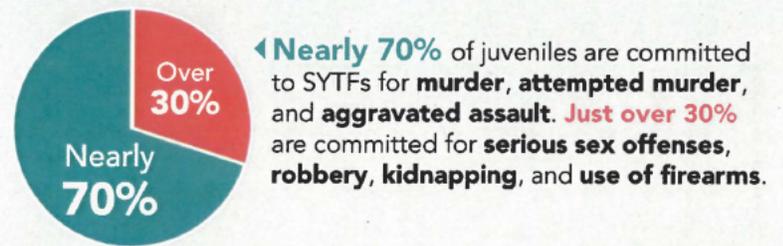
The Juvenile Justice System Today: More Serious and Complex

Secure Youth Treatment Facilities (SYTFs), operated by county probation departments, now house youth and young adults (up to 25 years old) adjudicated for the most serious violent offenses.

Age at Commitment to SYTF



High Rates of Serious Violent Offenses



A System Built Without Safeguards

LRPs were created as step-down placements, but without the foundational safeguards typically required for high-need, high-risk populations. This creates risk for youth safety, program quality, fiscal responsibility, and community safety.

- ✗ No licensing or inspection protocols
- ✗ No statewide regulatory framework
- ✗ No rate structure or cost controls
- ✗ No consistent safety or program standards
- ✗ No oversight for nongovernmental providers

We Must Get this Right for Our Youth and Communities



LRPs are an important part of rehabilitation, but only when they are safe, structured, and treatment-driven.

We would not place other vulnerable youth in out-of-home settings without clear expectations, safeguards, and accountability.

While they are high-risk, the young adults in SYTFs also have acute and complex needs. LRP placements, particularly because they are still part of the baseline detention term, must match the level of need and readiness.

A Framework for Safety and Rehabilitation



Youth and communities in California deserve a structured framework that protects youth, supports public safety, and strengthens rehabilitation outcomes. This includes:

- ✓ Clear statewide standards for LRPs
- ✓ Defined rate structures and fiscal guardrails
- ✓ Strong safety and treatment standards
- ✓ Court confidence in LRP placements
- ✓ A continuum that prepares youth for safe community return