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# The two counties singled out as the worst in FL in issuing civil citations to juveniles

By Mike Vasilinda | Posted: Wed 10:21 PM, Sep 14, 2016 | Updated: Wed 10:50 PM, Sep 14, 2016



TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (CAPITOL NEWS DESK) -Police in Florida arrested nearly 12,000 juveniles for minor offenses last year, even though all were eligible for a civil citation.



A new study commissioned by the Children's Campaign shows using criminal sanctions results in more repeat offenders.

"For vandalism, the civil citation recidivism rate is three percent," Dewey Caruthers, author of Stepping Up Study, said. "For post arrest diversion is nine percent, triple the rate."

The use of civil citations was up five percent last year, but Duval and Hillsborough saw a significant drop.

"Duval has an average rate of 29 percent, Hillsborough 29 percent, which is an actual drop from the previous year," Caruthers said.

The way the system works right now is police may have jurisdiction on this side of the street and use civil citations. The Sheriff may have jurisdiction across the street and not.

"You can't have a system in which things vary from county to county, from law enforcement agency to law enforcement agency, or from community to community within the same county," Howard Simon, ACLU Florida's Executive Director, said.

The study estimates at least \$20 million, and maybe three times that much, is spent prosecuting kids. The conservative James Madison Institute says that doesn't include significant long term costs.

"They pay more taxes as opposed to using the social services safety net," Sal Nuzzo, James Madison Institute said. "They are more likely to get student loans to be able to go to higher education and end up getting down the road."

Use of the noncriminal citations are optional for

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Advocates say requiring an officer to justify an arrest in writing to a supervisor is the single most important thing that could lead to fewer criminal sanctions and more second chances for kids.

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