



City of Cincinnati

801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Agenda

Youth & Human Services

Chairperson Anna Albi
Vice Chair Evan Nolan
Councilmember Ryan James
Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Kearney

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

12:30 PM

Council Chambers, Room 300

AGENDA

PRESENTATIONS

Learning Grove Presentation and Widening the Lens Introduction

Deanna White, Director of Human Services

Elissa Yancy, A Picture's Worth

Michelle Toney, FamiliesFORWARD/Learning Grove

Viccari Smith, Withrow Student

Richard Thomas, Withrow Student

Phaniece Smith, Withrow Student

Ameerah Thompson, Withrow Student

Youth Defense in Hamilton County

Angela Chang, Director Youth Defense Division, Hamilton County Public Defender

1. [202600423](#) **PRESENTATION**, submitted by Councilmember Anna Albi regarding Youth Defense in Hamilton County

Sponsors: Albi
Attachments: [Youth Defense Presentation](#)
2. [202600233](#) **MOTION**, submitted by Councilmember Albi and Jeffreys. **WE MOVE** that the Administration prepare a report within 30 days assessing the need for additional lighting and camera infrastructure across city parks, playgrounds and recreational areas owned by Cincinnati Parks and the Cincinnati Recreation Commission, with priority given to locations that have already experienced shootings and the five neighborhoods experiencing the highest levels of gun violence. **WE FURTHER MOVE** that the Administration prepare a separate subsequent report within 30 days of the initial report outlining the

costs associated with installing, operating, and maintaining recommended lighting and camera improvements identified in the initial report, including any potential funding sources. (STATEMENT ATTACHED)

Sponsors:

Albi and Jeffreys

Attachments:

[Anna Albi Motion](#)

ADJOURNMENT

YOUTH DEFENSE IN HAMILTON COUNTY

ANGELA CHANG, DIRECTOR,
YOUTH DEFENSE DIVISION

HAMILTON COUNTY PUBLIC
DEFENDER





ESTABLISHED 1976

- Hamilton County Public Defender Commission: 5 Members
- 2008 NLADA Report/ Resulting MOU
- HPCD Attorneys and “Panel” Attorneys
- Office:
 - 178 Employees
 - 110 Attorneys





PUBLIC DEFENSE ROLE

- Protect constitutional rights
- Hold government/police accountable
- Identify systemic issues
- Share community experience and voice
- Inform policy changes

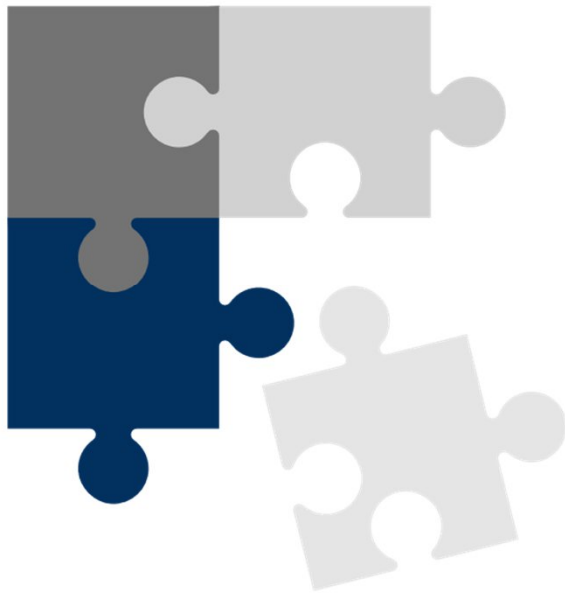
WHY YOUTH DEFENDERS?

In Re Gault (1967)- U.S. Supreme Court recognizes that children in delinquency proceedings are entitled to certain procedural safeguards under the Due Process Clause

- Hamilton County Public Defender Youth Defense Division
 - Holistic Defense Model: Social Workers, Mitigation Specialists, Civil Legal Services



INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM FOR THE WHOLE CHILD



- Educational Advocacy
- Civil Legal Services
- Mental Health/Community Supports
- Participatory Defense
- Community Partnerships



A CHILD'S RIGHTS

- When a child's liberty interests are at stake, he or she has a constitutional **right to be represented by a lawyer**. A child should get an attorney as early in the process as possible.
- A child has a **right to remain silent** and should NOT speak to the police without an attorney present. The child must ask for a lawyer.
- In Ohio, all children are considered indigent and eligible for public defense representation.
- When a parent files a charge against their child, the court will require that the child have an attorney and Guardian Ad Litem.

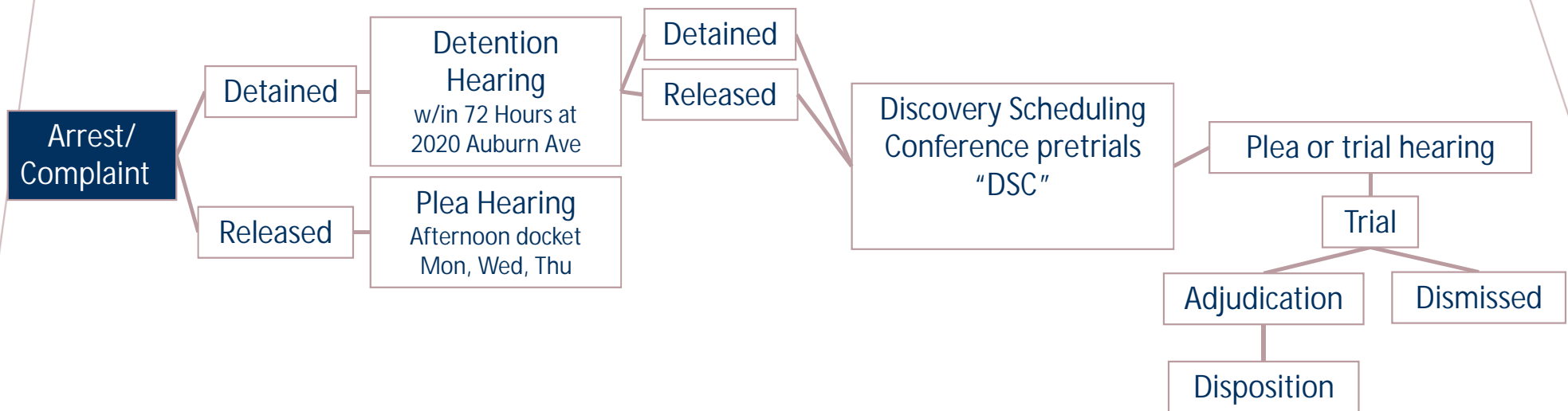


OHIO JUVENILE COURT

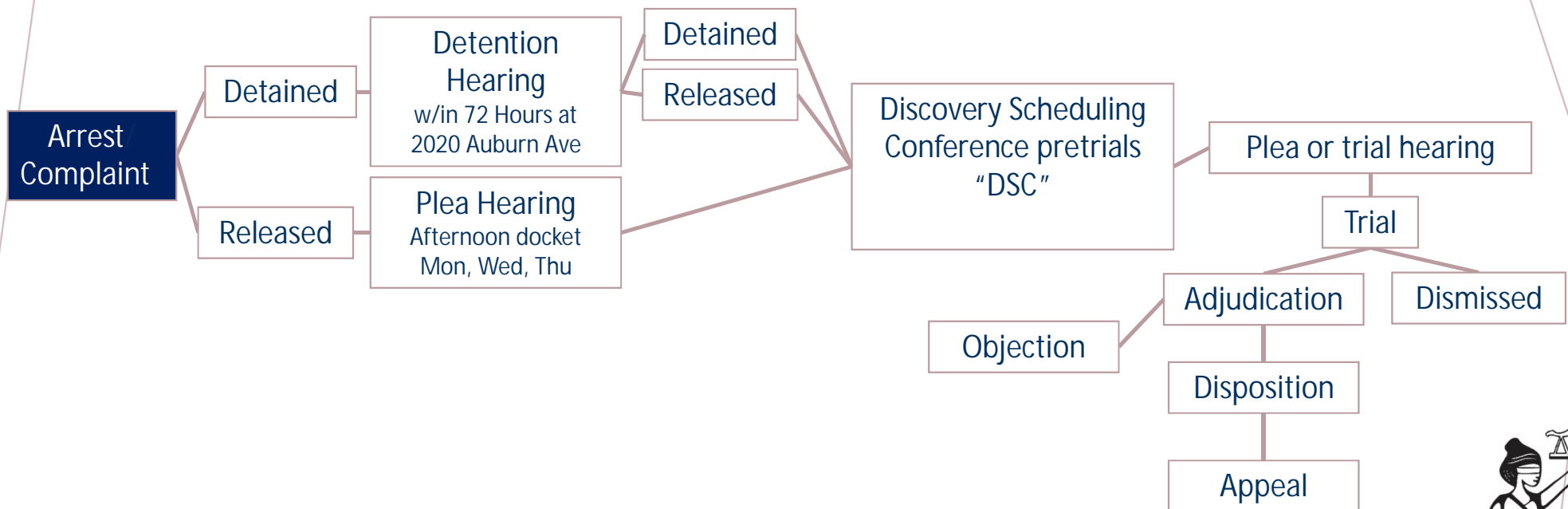
- Anyone under 18 who is accused of a crime can be charged in juvenile court
- Juvenile court is meant to focus on what's best for a child and rehabilitation, but can often be punitive
- Juvenile court records are not convictions, but can still impact your future



JUVENILE COURT PROCESS



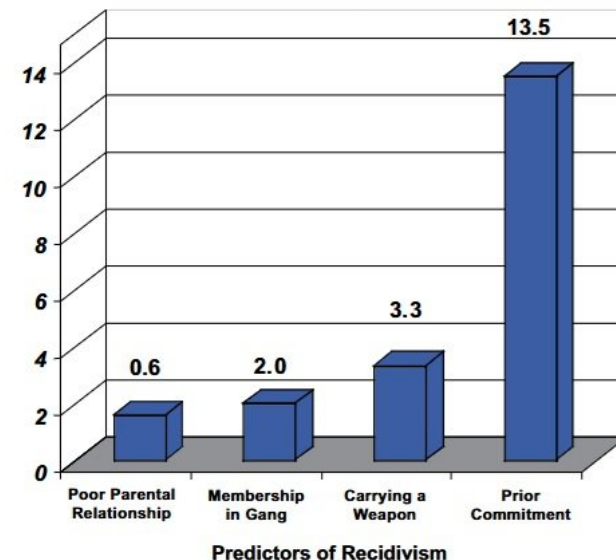
JUVENILE COURT PROCESS



THE HARMS OF DETENTION

- Detention can increase recidivism
 - Interrupts natural process of maturing/"aging out of delinquency"
 - Increases risk of self harm and exacerbates mental health
 - Interrupts education
- Disproportionately affects youth of color and youth with disabilities
- Alternatives to detention are more effective and less costly to reduce crime

Prior Incarceration was a Greater Predictor of Recidivism than Carrying a Weapon, Gang Membership, or Poor Parental Relationship



Source: Benda, B.B. and Tollef, C.L. (1999), "A Study of Recidivism of Serious and Persistent Offenders Among Adolescents," Journal of Criminal Justice, Vol. 27, No. 2 111-126.



JUVENILE COURT CHEAT SHEET

Plea Hearing	First appearance on a charge. The equivalent of an adult arraignment. A child is advised of their charges formally. If they are detained after arrest, the judge or magistrate will also determine if they can be released to their parent or guardian.
Admit	Juvenile court equivalent of pleading "guilty"
Deny	Juvenile court equivalent of pleading "not guilty"
Discovery Scheduling Conference (DSC)	If a child remains in detention after their plea hearing, the subsequent hearings are usually referred to as a "DSC," which means the defense attorney is waiting for the prosecutor to provide evidence in the case.
Discovery	Evidence in a case, including but not limited to police reports, video, photographs, photo line ups, lab results, witness statements, and 911 calls.
Plea or Trial	If a child is not held after their first appearance, their next hearing is called a plea or trial hearing. At that hearing, the parties would inform the court whether the case will resolve in a plea (of admit) or if it will proceed to trial. If the case is ready to proceed to trial, a separate trial date will be chosen. Many times, the case will not be ready to proceed either way at the first or even second plea or trial hearing.
Pre-Trial	An information conference between the court, prosecutor, and attorney to determine the status of the case or discuss issues prior to a hearing.
Disposition	The equivalent of sentencing in adult court, where there may be a consequence but should be geared towards rehabilitation of the child.
Adjudication	The equivalent of finding of "guilty" in adult court. The child would be adjudicated delinquent through a trial or through admission of guilt.
Amenability Hearing	Hearing where the judge will decide whether or not a child is "amenable" to treatment in juvenile court, or in other words, can be rehabilitated
Sealing and Expungement	A juvenile record can be sealed (not accessible to the public) or expunged (record destroyed as if it never happened)

SPECIAL ISSUES

- Competence to Stand Trial
- False/Involuntary Confessions
- Complicity
- Felony Murder
- Transfer to Adult Court
- Racial Profiling and Racial Disparities
- Prison Conditions
- Juvenile Sex Offender Classification
- Sealing and Expungement



SUGGESTED READING

- [The Age of Opportunity](#), Lawrence Steinberg
- [The Rage of Innocence](#), Kristin Henning
- Ohio Juvenile Justice Working Group Report, [2024](#), [2025 Updates](#)
- [Connections between youth mental health and the juvenile justice system](#), Health Policy Institute of Ohio (2026)
- [The Dangers of Detention](#), Justice Policy Institute (2013)
- [No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration](#), Annie E. Casey Foundation
- [Highlights From Pathways to Desistance: A Longitudinal Study of Serious Adolescent Offenders](#), Edward P. Mulvey (2011)





Anna Albi
Councilmember

January 22, 2026

MOTION


We MOVE that the Administration prepare a report within 30 days assessing the need for additional lighting and camera infrastructure across city parks, playgrounds and recreational areas owned by Cincinnati Parks and the Cincinnati Recreation Commission, with priority given to locations that have already experienced shootings and the five neighborhoods experiencing the highest levels of gun violence.

We further MOVE that the Administration prepare a separate subsequent report within 30 days of the initial report outlining the costs associated with installing, operating, and maintaining recommended lighting and camera improvements identified in the initial report, including any potential funding sources.

STATEMENT

Recent incidents of gun violence involving children and youth in and around Cincinnati's public parks and recreational areas highlight the urgent need to evaluate safety conditions in these shared spaces. On January 1, 2026, eleven-year-old QueenEr'Re Reed was tragically shot and killed while playing at Laurel Playground in the West End, a public park where children and families routinely gather. In Over-the-Rhine, a pattern of youth-involved gun violence has occurred near Grant Park, including the October 2025 shooting of two juveniles, ages 12 and 15, who were injured when multiple shots were fired nearby, as well as the September 2025 shooting of sixteen-year-old Thomas Bell, who later died from his injuries. These incidents have taken place in and around spaces intended for recreation, connection, and community, underscoring the importance of environmental design in shaping both safety outcomes and public confidence.

Adequate lighting and strategically placed cameras are proven tools that can deter violence, increase natural surveillance, and improve the feeling of safety for residents using parks and recreational spaces. This report will allow us to understand the existing infrastructure, identify gaps, and prioritize investments in neighborhoods most impacted by gun violence to help ensure that Cincinnati's public spaces are safe, welcoming, and worthy of the families who rely on them.



Councilmember Anna Albi

Mass Jeffrey