

THE CROSSING POINT: TEXAS TAKES PROPORTIONATELY MORE CHILDREN THAN ILLINOIS, BUT ILLINOIS IS A MODEL FOR SAFETY

An update to the entry-into -care data in NCCPR's Texas Report, April 2008

When we released our [report on Texas child welfare](#) in January, 2005, we included an appendix with tables comparing Texas to Illinois.

We weren't the first to compare the two states. The idea first was suggested by former Texas Judge Scott McCown, leading proponent of the take-the-child-and-run approach to child welfare in Texas and a key figure in two foster care panics that have swept through the state in a decade.

McCown made the suggestion back in 1998. Back then, he admired the Illinois system, which had proportionately more children trapped in foster care than any other. But in Illinois itself, this was no cause for celebration. On the contrary, advocates in that state realized the enormous harm being done to children. Led by the Illinois Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, they pressed the state to reverse course and embrace safe, proven approaches to keeping families together.

Today, like every other child welfare system in the country, the one in Illinois still has serious problems. But experts across the country have hailed the reformed system as, relatively speaking, a national model. **And independent, court appointed monitors have found that, as the number of children taken from their parents has plummeted, child safety has improved.**

Today, whether one compares removals to the total child population or, as we believe is fairer, to the total number of children living in poverty, Illinois takes proportionately fewer children than Texas. The figures are in the tables on the following page. In each table, the line in bold face indicates the crossing point - the year when the state's positions reversed, and Illinois began taking proportionately fewer children.

TABLES ARE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Sources:

Child Population:

- 1998, 1999, U.S. Census Bureau, *Population Estimates for the U.S., Regions, and States by Selected Age Groups and Sex*, available online at <http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/ST-99-09.txt>

- 2000 – 2006: U.S. Census Bureau, *Annual Estimates of the Population by Sex and Age* for Illinois/Texas, available online at: <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/SC-EST2006-02.html> Since data are not available for 2007 we used the same figure as for 2006.

Impoverished child population:

- 2004 to 2006: U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, Annual Demographic Survey, 2006 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*, available online at http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032007/pov/new46_100125_03.htm As recommended by experts in child poverty, NCCPR used a three-year average for this estimate. To get totals for 2004 and 2005 (to create a three-year average) use the same URL but change 032007 to 032006 and 032005. The 2006 average figure also is used for 2007.

- Prior years: U.S. Census Bureau, *Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates: State & County Estimates*, available online at: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/county.html>

Substitute Care:

- 1998, 1999: Administration for Children and Families, AFCARS database, no longer available on the ACF site, but available through the Child Welfare League of America's National Data Analysis System by going to http://ndas.cwla.org/data_stats/access/predefined/Report.asp?ReportID=388 and following instructions to create the relevant table.

- 2000-2002, Texas and 2000-2005, Illinois: Administration for Children and Families, AFCARS database, *Foster Care: Entries, Exits, and In Care on the Last Day*, available online at

- http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/statistics/entryexit2005.htm 2006, Illinois: Same source but data are not available online, they were obtained by NCCPR through a federal Freedom of Information Act request.

- 2003 - 2007, Texas: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, annual *Data Books*.

- 2007 Illinois: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, *Executive Statistical Summary*, February, 2008, available online at <http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/execstat.pdf>

RATES OF CHILD REMOVAL IN TEXAS AND ILLINOIS

(Year in bold is the “crossing point”)

Fiscal Year	Texas: Children Removed	Texas: Rate of Removal (per thousand children)	Illinois: Children Removed	Illinois: Rate of Removal (per thousand children)
1998	7,025	1.24	9,229	2.9
1999	8,938	1.56	7,325	2.3
2000	9,869	1.60	6,607	2.0
2001	10,680	1.76	6,350	1.9
2002	11,766	1.91	5,973	1.8
2003	12,050	1.93	5,074	1.6
2004	13,431	2.15	5,669	1.74
2005	17,428	2.75	5,718	1.76
2006	17,536	2.70	5,004	1.56
2007	15,920	2.45	4,386	1.36

Fiscal Year	Texas: Children Removed	Texas: Rate of Removal (per thousand IMPOVERISHED children)	Illinois: Children Removed	Illinois: Rate of Removal (per thousand IMPOVERISHED children)
1998	7,025	5.4	9,229	18.5
1999	8,938	7.0	7,325	15.2
2000	9,869	8.0	6,607	14.2
2001	10,680	8.2	6,350	13.5
2002	11,766	8.9	5,973	12.1
2003	12,050	8.5	5,074	10.0
2004	13,431	9.5	5,669	10.5
2005	17,428	12.1	5,718	11.0
2006	17,536	12.2	5,004	9.6
2007	15,920	11.1	4,386	8.4