



## Key Message

Military installations subject to exclusive federal jurisdiction often handle juvenile offenses through the federal system, which has no established juvenile justice system. Adopting policies that facilitate concurrent jurisdiction between the state and military installations opens the door to the state juvenile justice system and resources, offering improved opportunities for rehabilitation tailored to address juveniles.

## Discussion Points

1. State juvenile systems specialize in rehabilitative justice, reducing repeat offenses and promoting community safety. Allowing states to exercise jurisdiction aligns military communities with state resources, relieving federal courts of inappropriate caseloads and returning the focus of federal prosecutors and military law enforcement to their primary responsibilities.
2. When children on military installations face the adult federal court system, rather than state and local juvenile courts, they receive adult sentences that create permanent criminal records. This forces military families to choose between their child's future and continued military service.
3. Policymakers can modernize their framework to allow the military installation to retrocede or transfer jurisdiction – which helps prevent gaps or uncertainties – in efforts to enhance the state's ability to increase access to justice for juveniles.
4. State law could also include a mechanism for the federal government to transfer its jurisdiction to the state on a case-by-case or installation-by-installation basis, ensuring that each situation is handled with the utmost care.
5. Enabling state juvenile courts to handle cases involving military children ensures age-appropriate consequences focused on rehabilitation rather than punishment, helping keep military families intact and service members mission ready.
6. Voluntary local agreements between installation commanders and state officials create clear protocols that eliminate confusion and delays, ensuring swifter resolution of juvenile cases without pulling military personnel away from operational duties.



Historically, the federal government obtained exclusive jurisdiction over land by agreement with the owning state or maintained jurisdiction after forming a new state. However, as military installations welcome more civilians, the need to shift from exclusive to concurrent jurisdiction becomes evident.