

HB 541 -- Jonathan's Law

Sponsor: Hicks

This bill establishes Jonathan's Law that requires a child be convicted in a court of general jurisdiction in order for the jurisdiction of the juvenile court over that child to forever terminate for an act that would be a violation of a state law or municipal ordinance.

Currently, if a child is under 17 years old and has been convicted in a court of general jurisdiction, the court is allowed to invoke dual jurisdiction of both the criminal and juvenile codes. The bill raises the age to 17 years and six months of age and requires the court to consider dual jurisdiction.

If the Division of Youth Services within the Department of Social Services agrees to accept a youth and the court does not impose a juvenile disposition, the court must make findings on the record as to why the division was not appropriate for an offender prior to imposing an adult criminal sentence.