

# *Criminal Justice: An Overview of the System*

## **Module 2: The Political and Legal Environment**

### *2.2: Politics in Criminal Justice*

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**Best Interest of the Child:** The guiding principle and primary focus of juvenile courts.

**Crime Control Model:** A conceptualization of criminal justice system characterized by an emphasis on aggressive crime suppression and control.

**Deinstitutionalization:** The process of moving residents of institutions, such as state hospitals, into the community.

**Doctrine of Proportionality:** The legal doctrine that the punishment should fit the crime rather than being too lenient or too harsh.

**Due Process Model:** A conceptualization of criminal justice system characterized by an emphasis on protecting civil liberties.

**Extralegal Factors:** Factors that exist outside of the law or that are contrary to the law.

**Informal Diversion:** The removal of a person from the criminal justice system or the juvenile justice system such that they do not have a criminal conviction and criminal record.

**Juvenile Court Act of 1899:** An Illinois law that established America's first Juvenile Court in Chicago.

**Juvenile Delinquency:** Violations of law committed by juveniles.

**Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Act of 1968:** A federal law aimed at creating community-level responses to juvenile delinquency.

**Parens Patriae:** A Latin legal phrase referring to the power of the government to provide guardianship of those (especially children) in need of care or supervision.

**Parole Board:** A panel of people that decide whether a prisoner should be released on parole after a minimum sentence has been served.

**Partisan Politics:** Political decision making guided by party interests and ideology.

**Policy:** A set of guiding principles adopted by an organization.

**Politicized:** Causing something to become political in character.

**Politics:** The activities associated with government as well as the public debates surrounding these activities.

**Preponderance of the Evidence:** An evidentiary standard in civil cases where the party to a case with the most compelling (convincing) evidence wins.

**Sheriff:** The chief law enforcement officer of a county; the office originated in feudal England as the shire-reeve.

**Static:** Unchanging

**Waiver:** The transfer of a juvenile to adult court, denying the juvenile the special treatment afforded by the juvenile court.