

# **If Crime is Dropping, Why Isn't Our Workload?**

Crime Benchmark Analysis  
Multnomah County Oregon



Department of Support Services

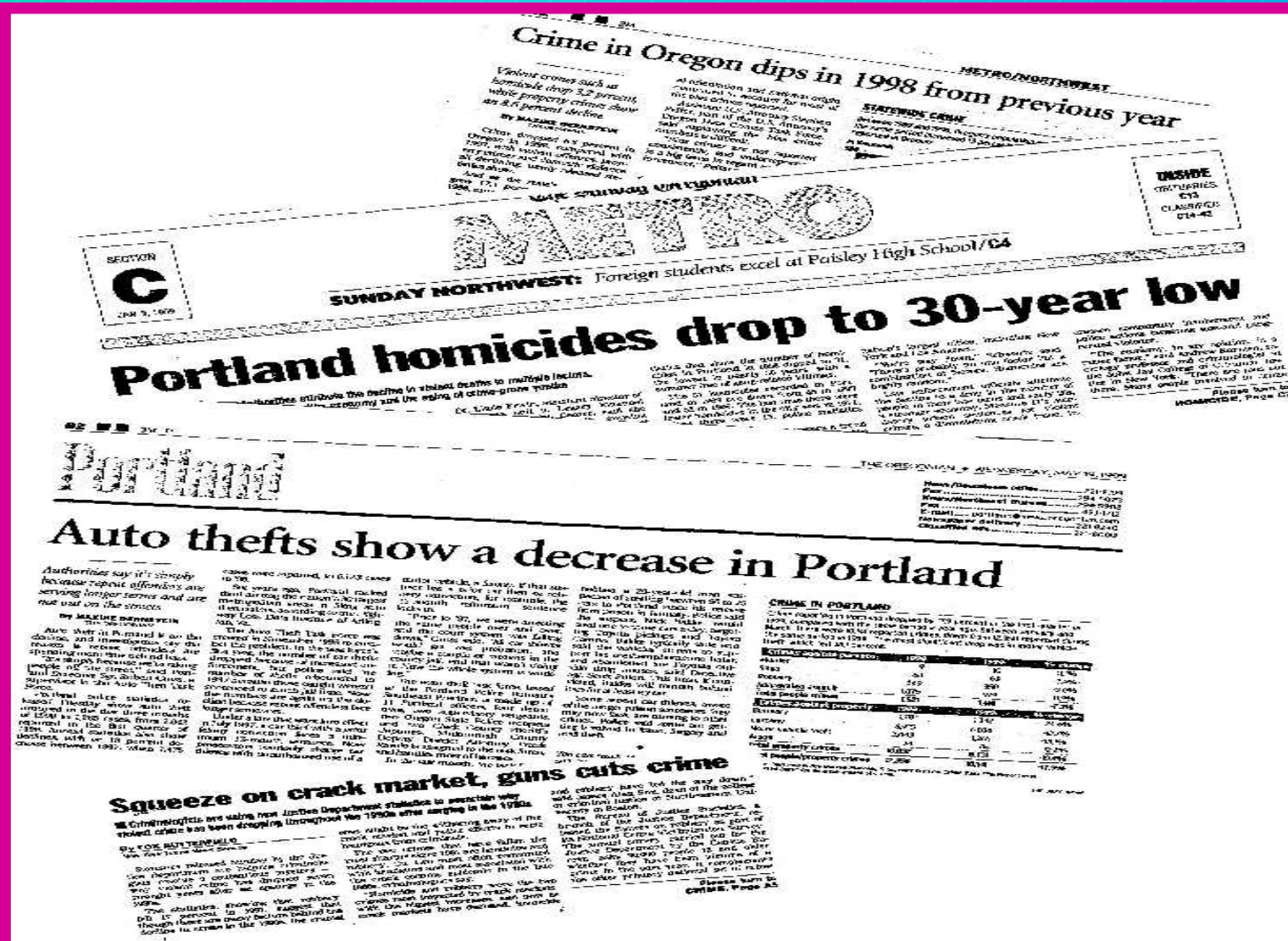
**MARCH 2000**

*[www.multnomah.lib.or.us/budget/eru/](http://www.multnomah.lib.or.us/budget/eru/)*

# If Crime is Dropping Why Isn't Our Workload?

A Presentation to the LPSCC Executive  
Committee by the Evaluation Committee  
March 7, 2000

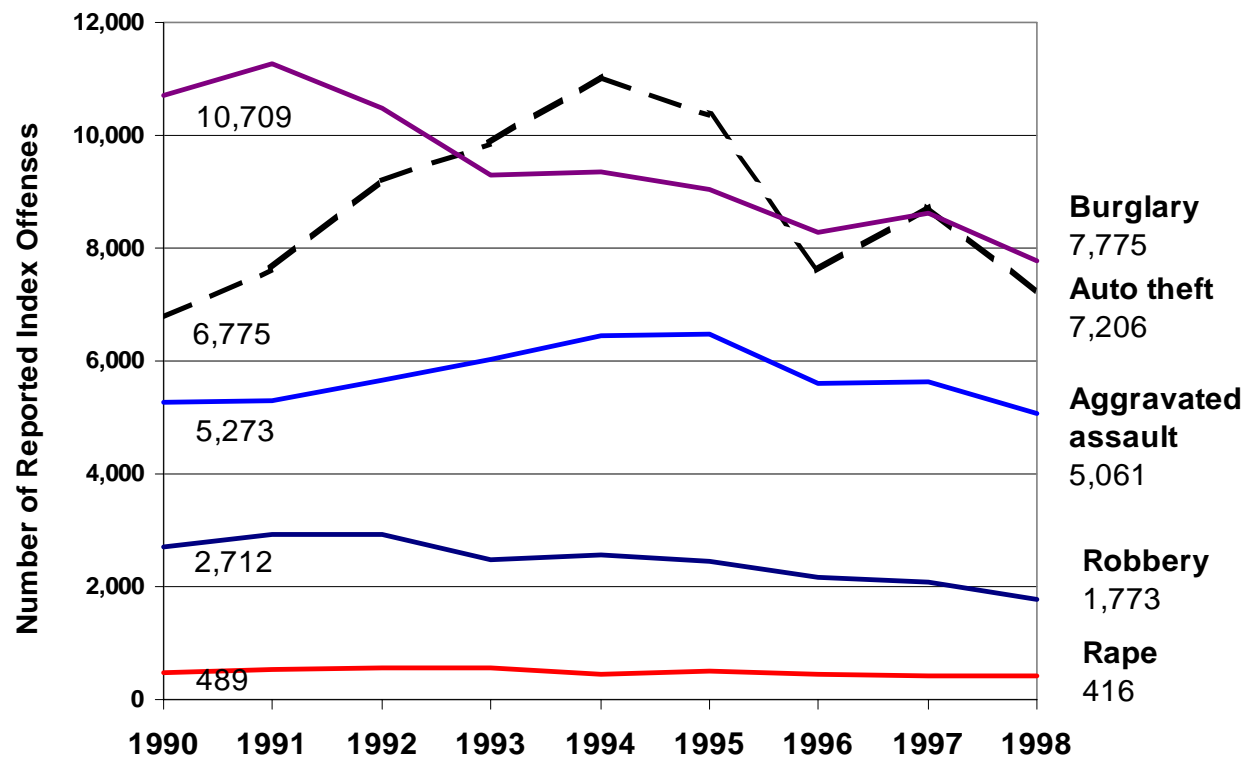
# What the Public Sees



# Multnomah County Crime Trends--

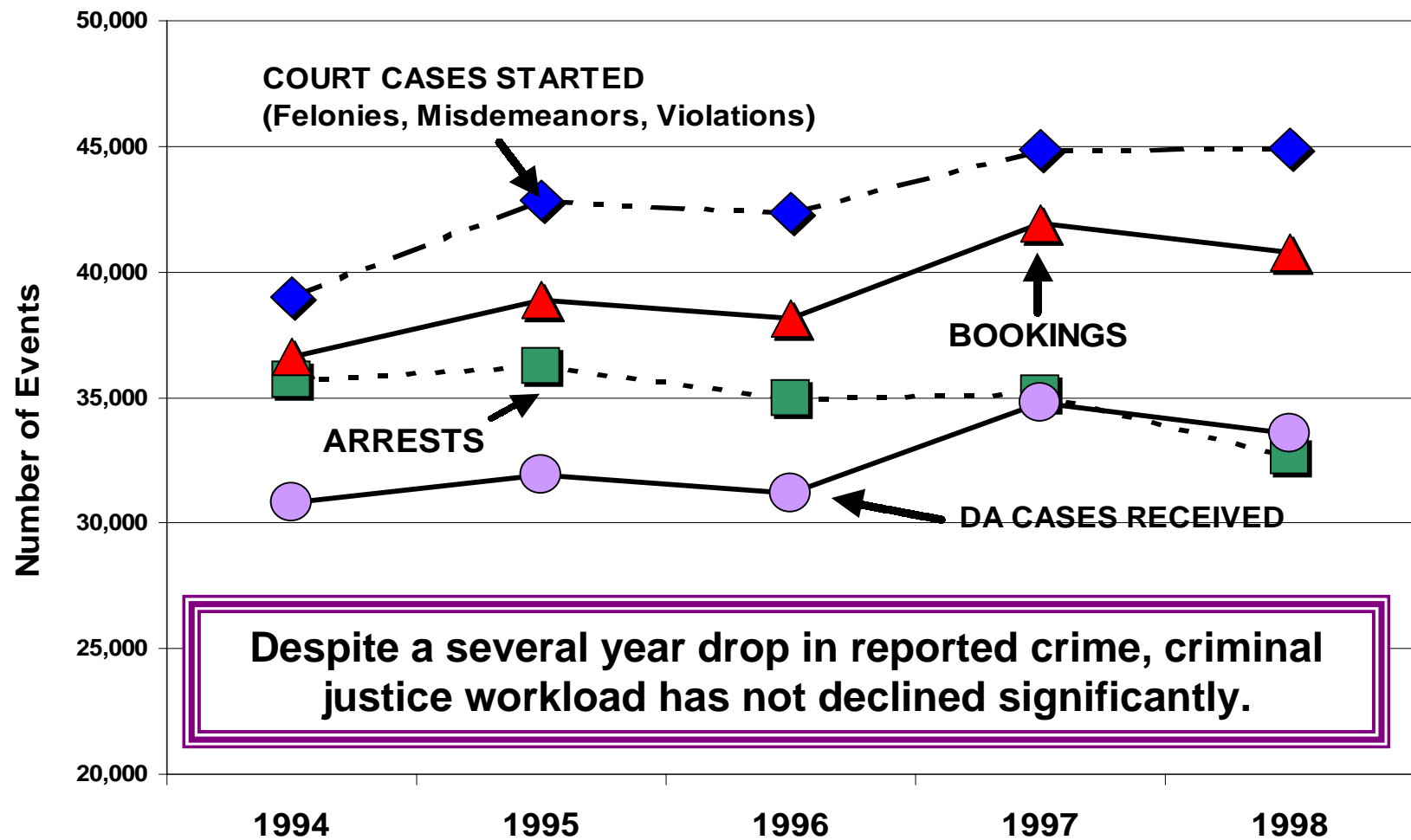
modeled after Jan 29 Oregonian article

## Multnomah County Reported Offenses in the '90s



Source: LEADS; Graph prepared by Multnomah County Budget & Quality Office Evaluation/Research Unit

# Workload Indicators 1994-98



Data sources: Arrests are from the State of Oregon LEDS Office. Remaining data is from DSS-Justice

# Part of the Answer to this Dilemma is that there are Different Ways to Measure Crime

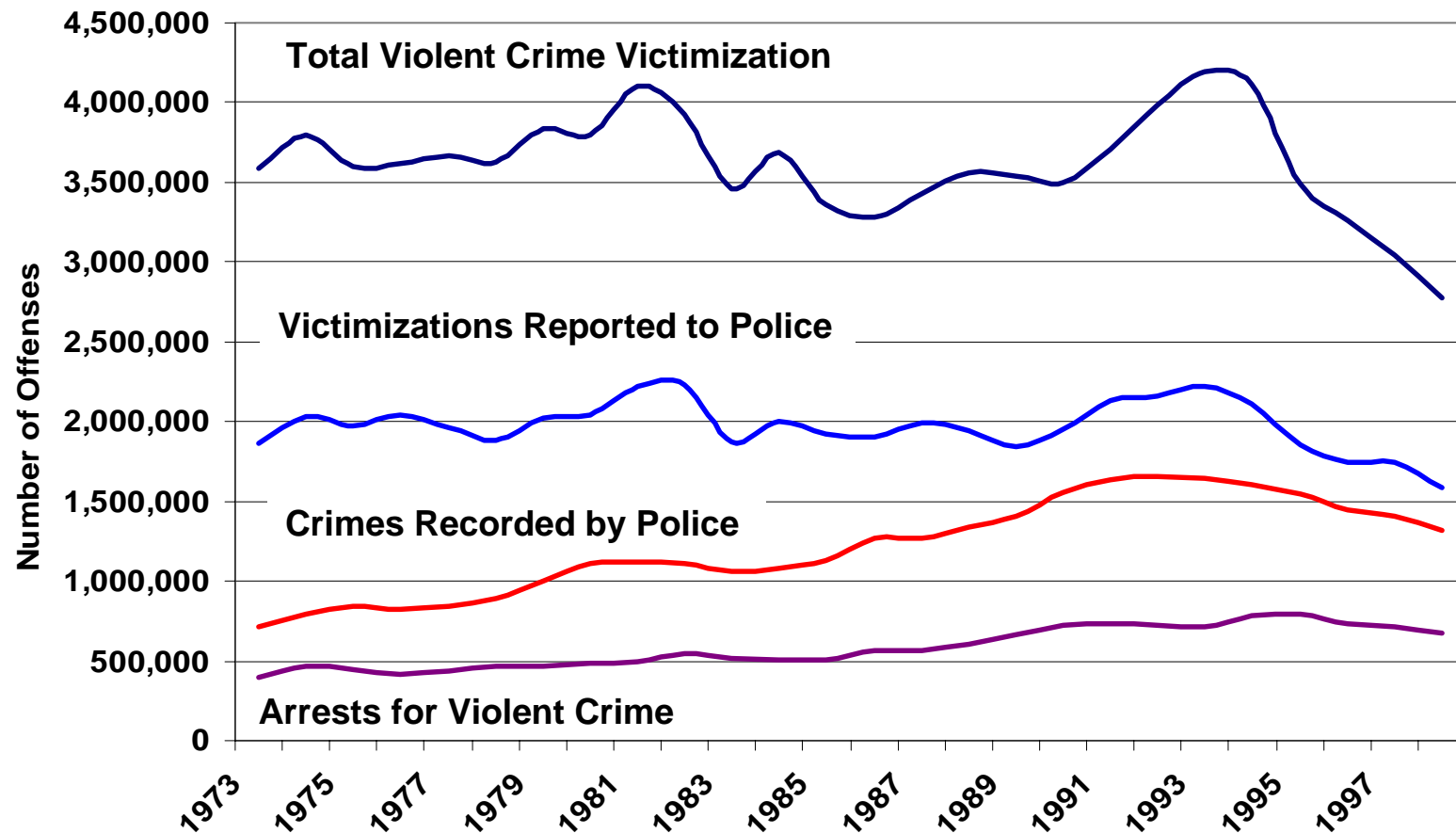
Measurement Method	• Index Crimes	All Crime
Victimization Surveys		<i>Public Experience</i>
Reported (& recorded) Offenses	<i>Reported in Newspapers</i>	<i>Law Enforcement Workload</i>
Arrests		<i>Workload entering the Criminal Justice System</i>

• Index crimes (a.k.a. Part 1 crimes) are 8 crimes that are defined comparably across jurisdictions--

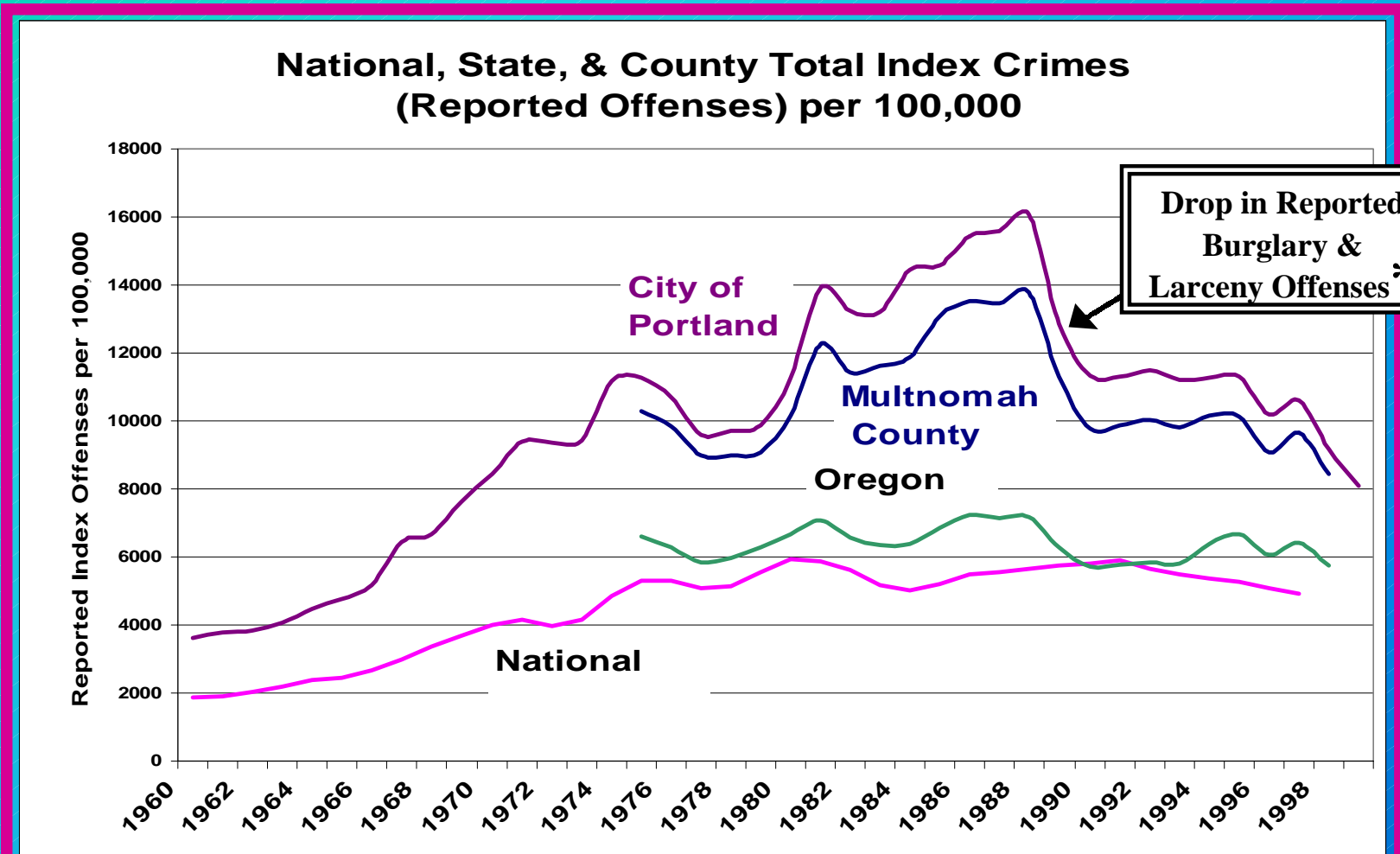
- 4 violent crimes (murder, forcible rape, robbery, & aggravated assault)
- 4 property crimes (burglary, larceny, motor-vehicle theft, & arson)

# Victimization vs. Reporting vs. Recording vs. Arrest

## Four Measures of Serious Violent Crime -- National Data



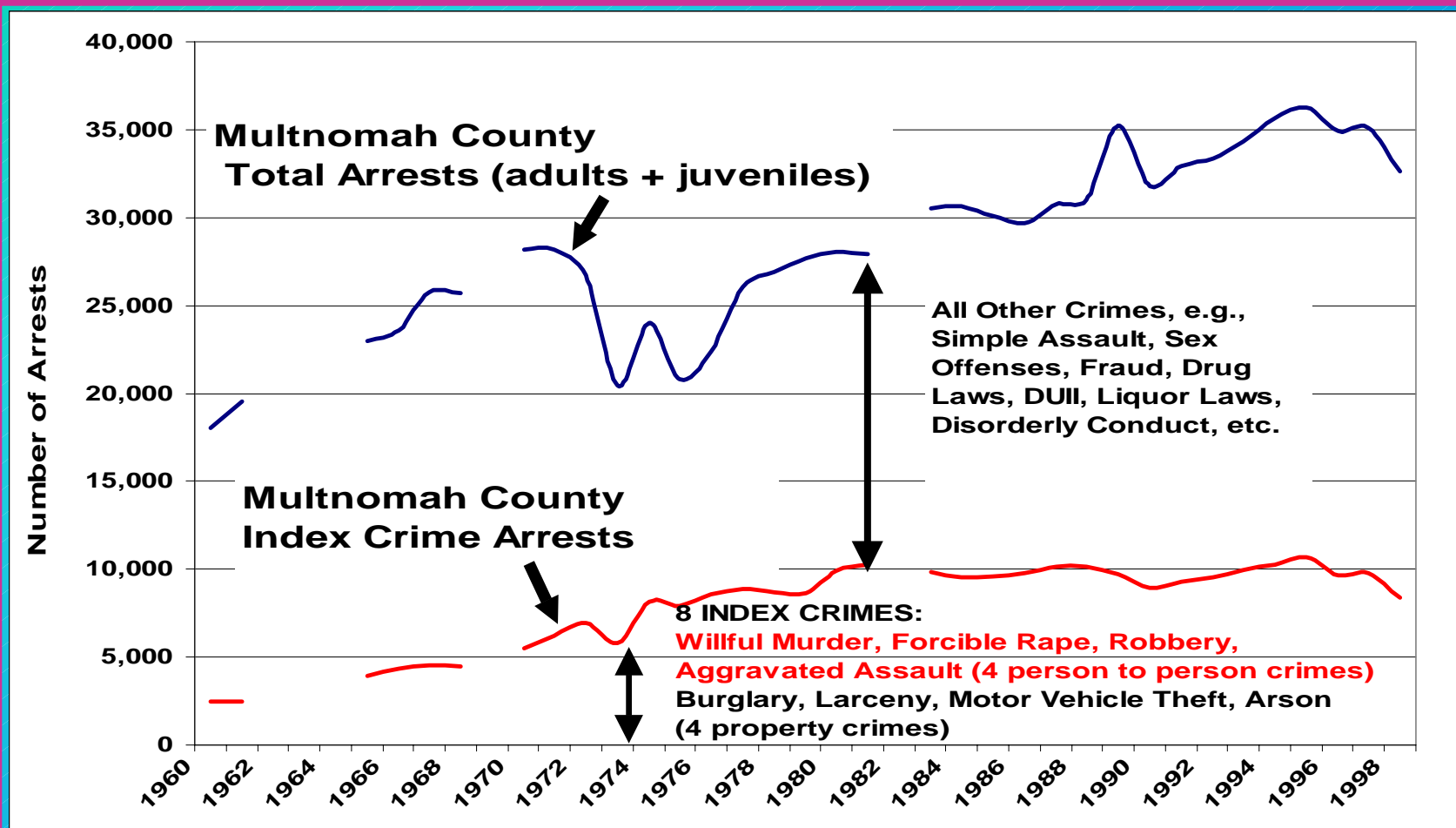
# Multnomah County Reported Index Offenses



**\* Note: Portland Police changed to mail-in reporting for some offenses in 1988-89. The drop may be at least in part due to this change in reporting procedure.**

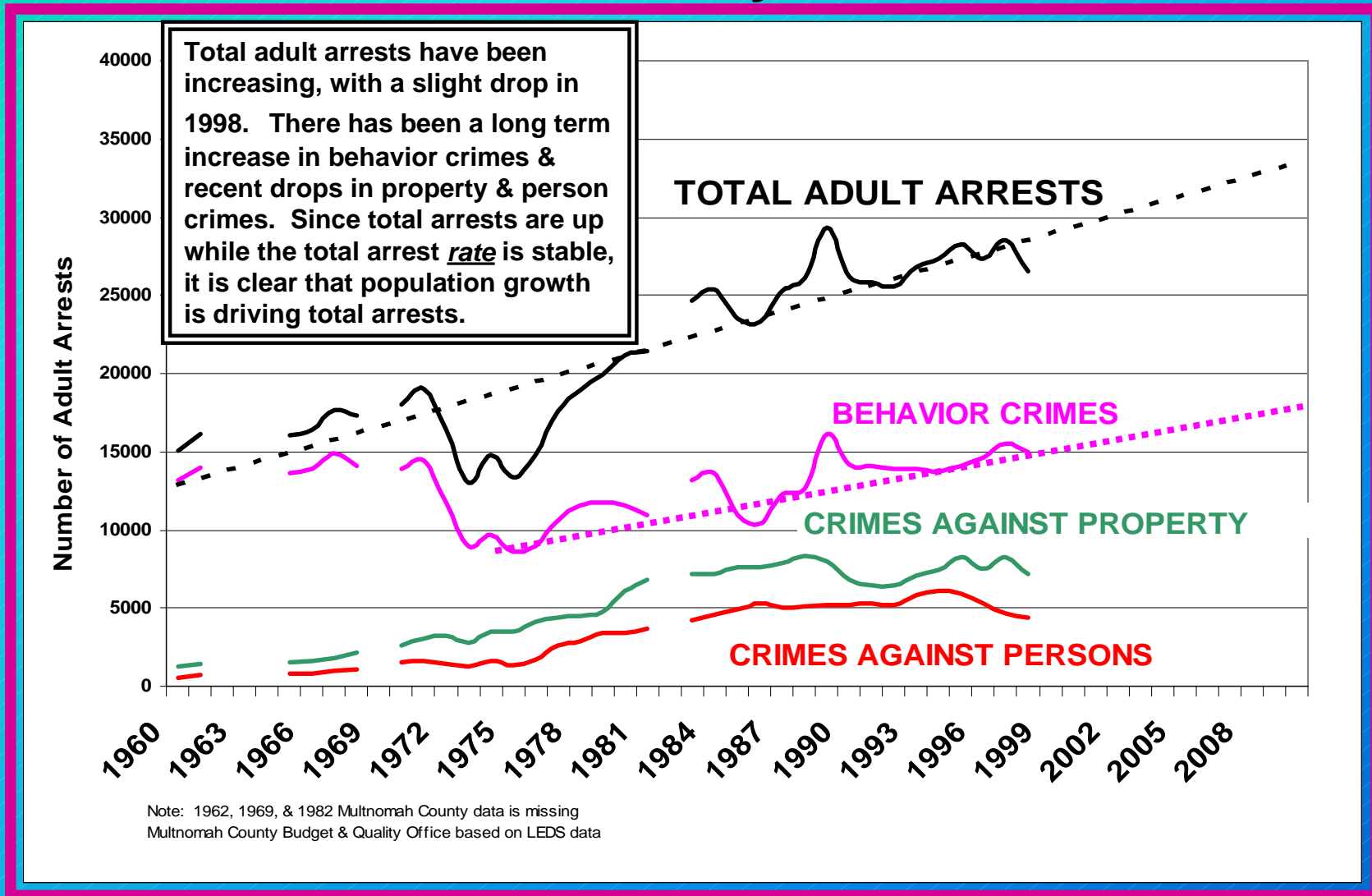


# Relationship of Arrests for Index Crimes to Arrests for Total Crimes in Multnomah County

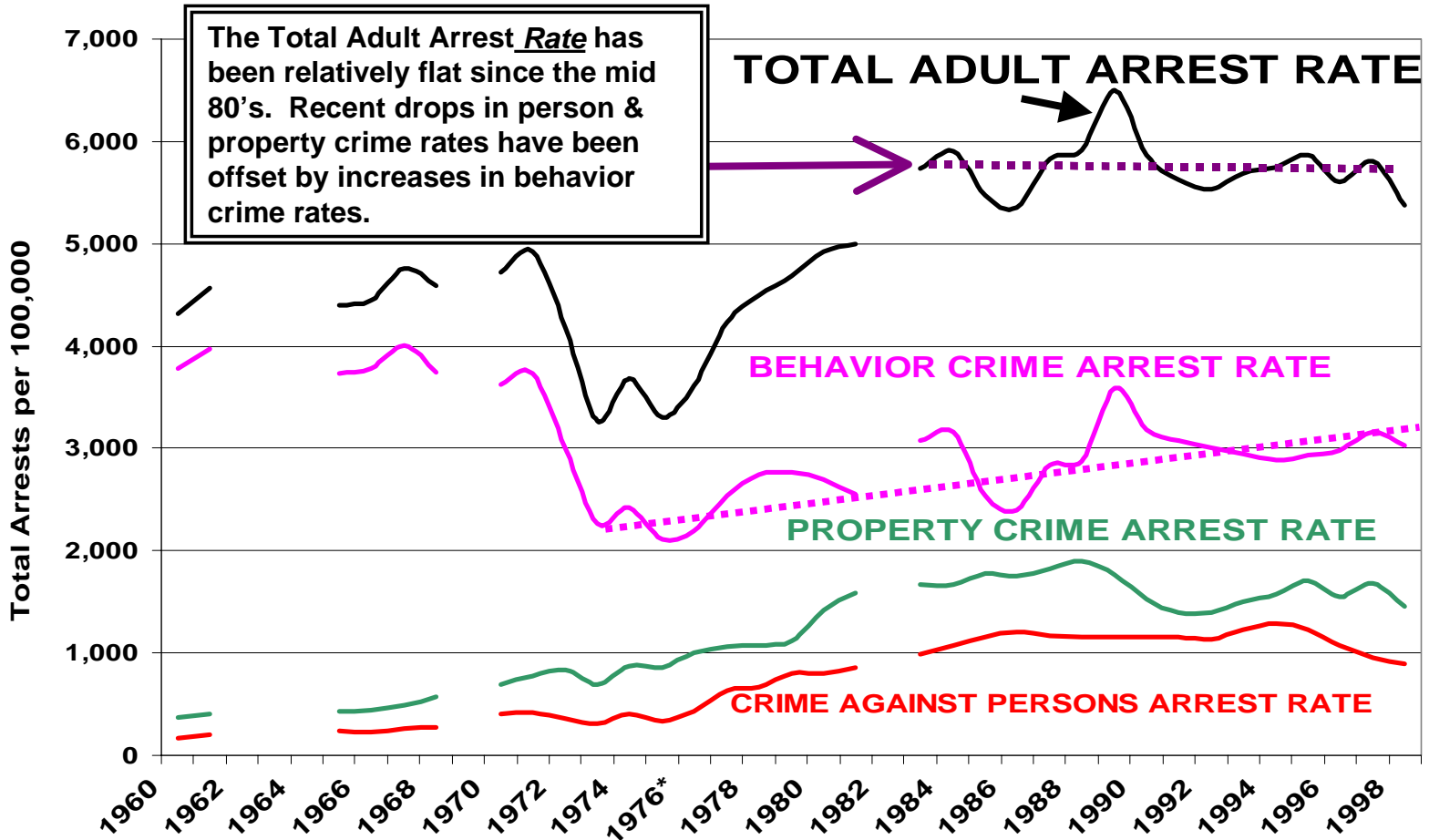


Stories in the newspaper are almost always based on index crime. Because arrests for index crime are only 26% of total arrests (1998) drops in index crime don't necessary decrease total workload.

# Adult Arrests Drive the Majority of Criminal Justice System Workload



# Multnomah County Adult Arrests Adjusted for Population Growth



Note: 1962, 1969, & 1982 Multnomah County data is missing  
 Multnomah County Budget & Quality Office based on LEDS data

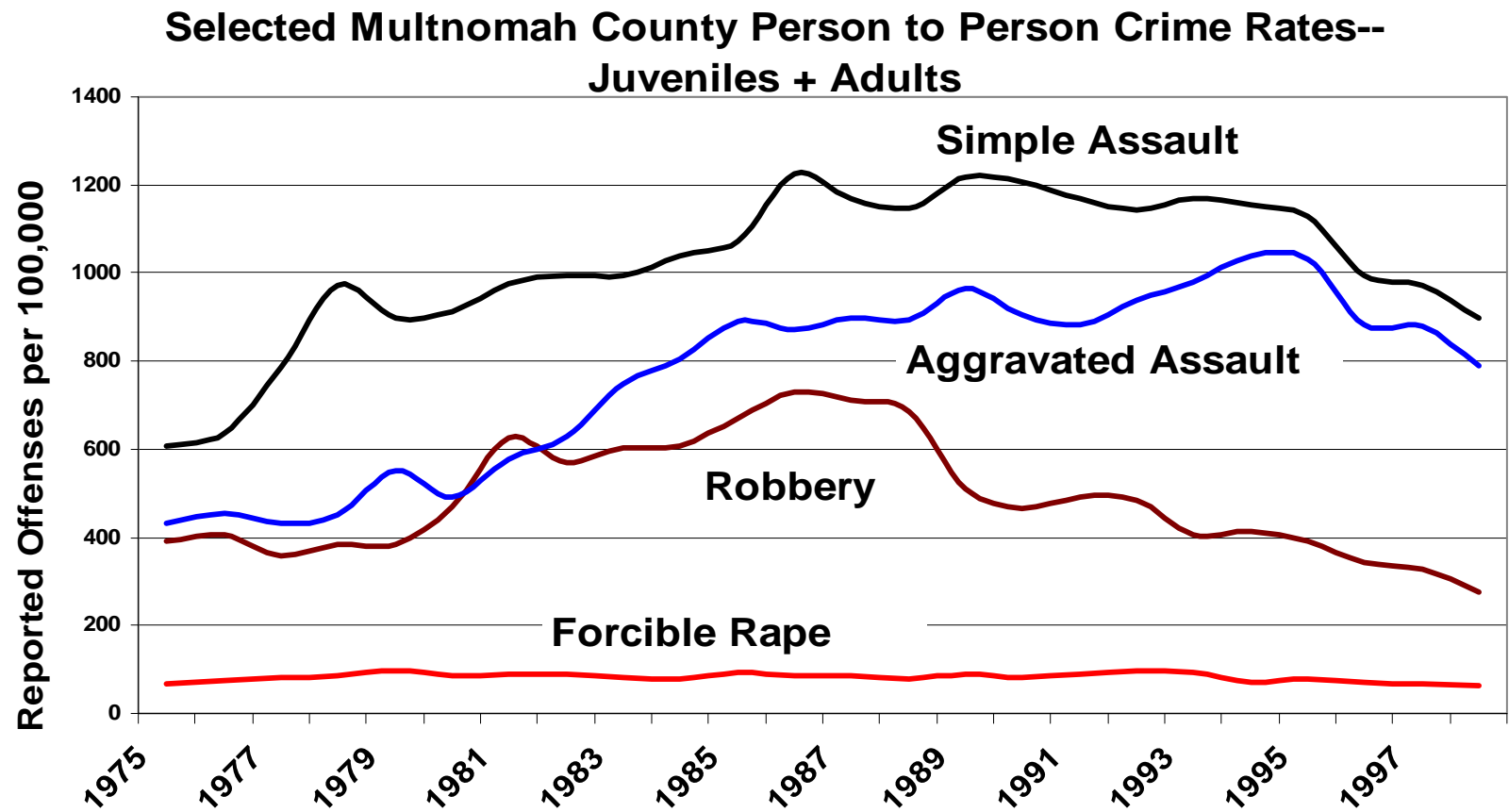
## So far, we have seen that:

- Reported index offenses are down--somewhat lower than in the early 1970s (What the papers report)
- Total arrests of adults are trending up--with a small decrease beginning in 1998 (A major driver of workload)
- Drops in person and property crime arrest rates are being offset by an increasing arrest rate for behavior crime. The total arrest rate is level.
- Thus, population growth and behavior crime are driving up total adult arrests and workload.

# Which specific types of crimes are increasing?

- Many types of person-to-person crimes are decreasing.
- Property crime is generally decreasing, although larceny, the major component, is not showing large drops.
- The nature of behavior crime is changing. Rapid growth in drug arrests and associated trespass violations is keeping criminal justice workload from falling.

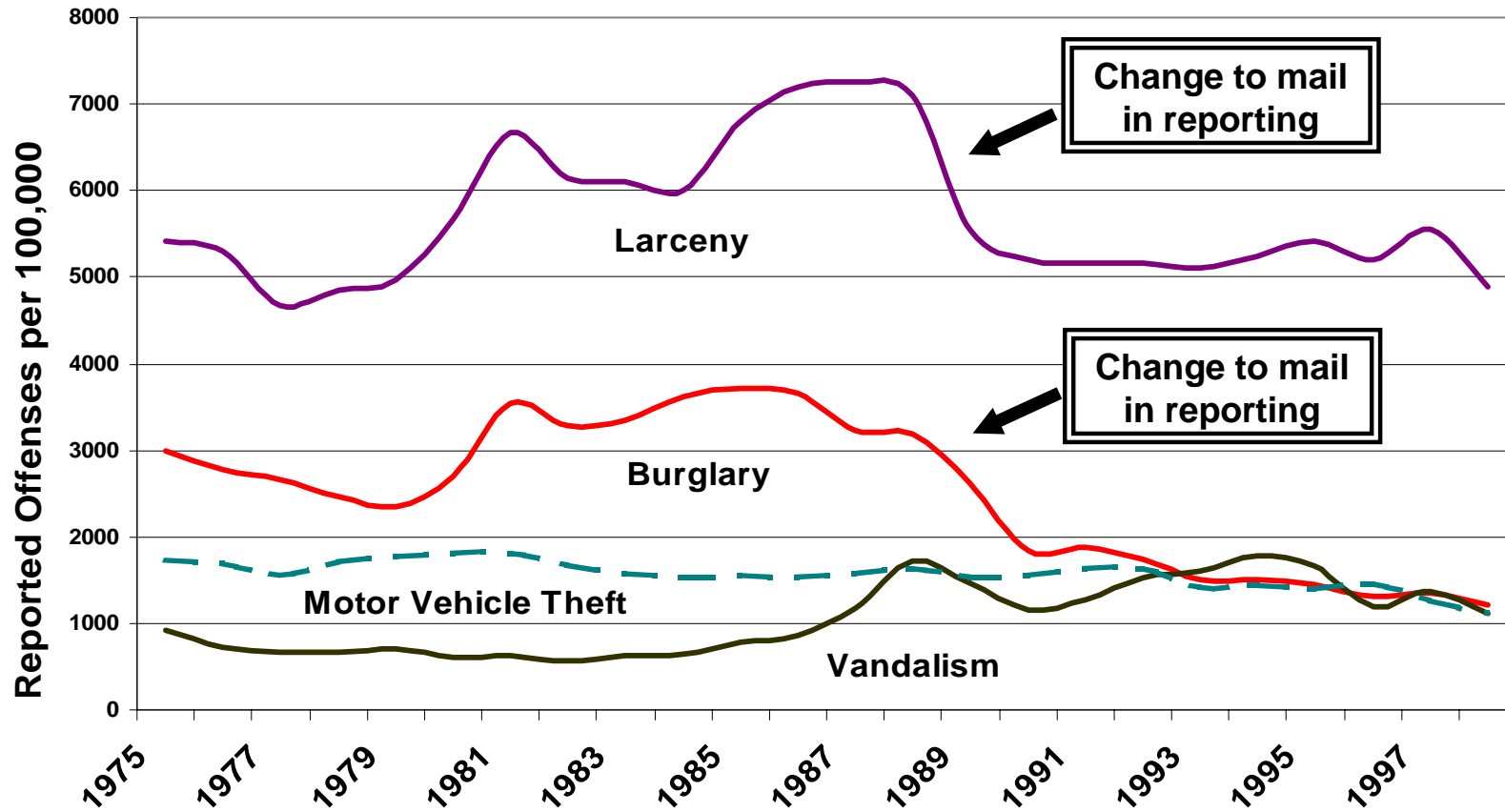
# Person to Person Crime Rates Are Decreasing



Note: Forcible rape, Robbery, and Aggravated assault are Index Crimes.  
Simple assault is not an index crime.  
Source: LEDS; Graph prepared by Multnomah County Budget & Quality Office Evaluation/Research Unit

# Most Property Crime Rates Are Decreasing

**Selected Multnomah County Reported Property Crime Rates--  
Juveniles + Adults**

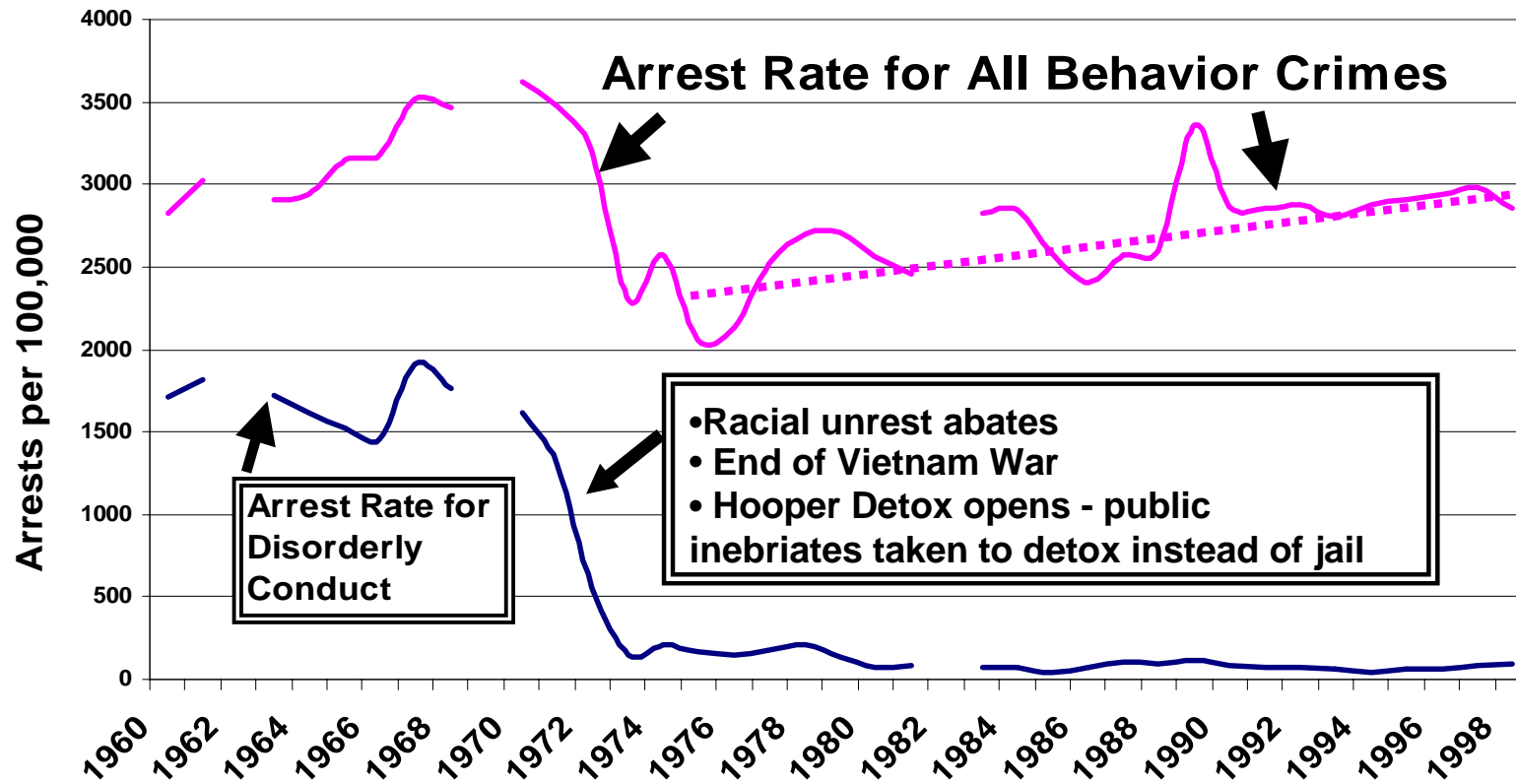


**Note:** Larceny, Burglary, and Motor Vehicle Theft are Index Crimes. Vandalism is not an Index Crime.

Source: LEDS; Graph prepared by Multnomah County Budget & Quality Office Evaluation/Research Unit

# The Nature of Behavior Crime is Changing

**Multnomah County Behavior Crime Arrests--Juveniles + Adults  
1960 to mid 70's--"The Era of Disorderly Conduct"**



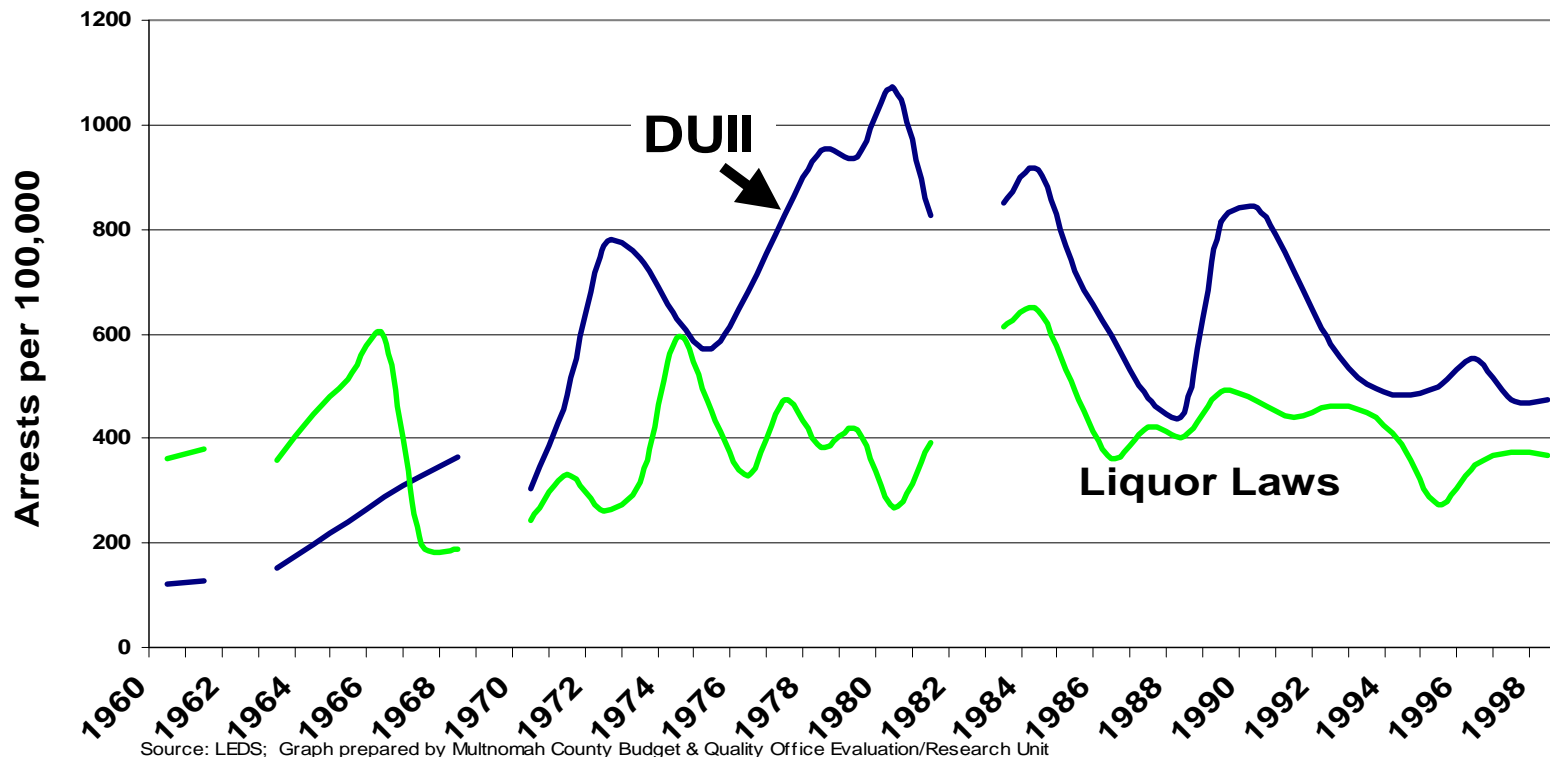
**Note: Disorderly Conduct is one of 11 categories of behavioral crimes used by LEDS**

Source: LEDS; Graph prepared by Multnomah County Budget & Quality Office Evaluation/Research Unit



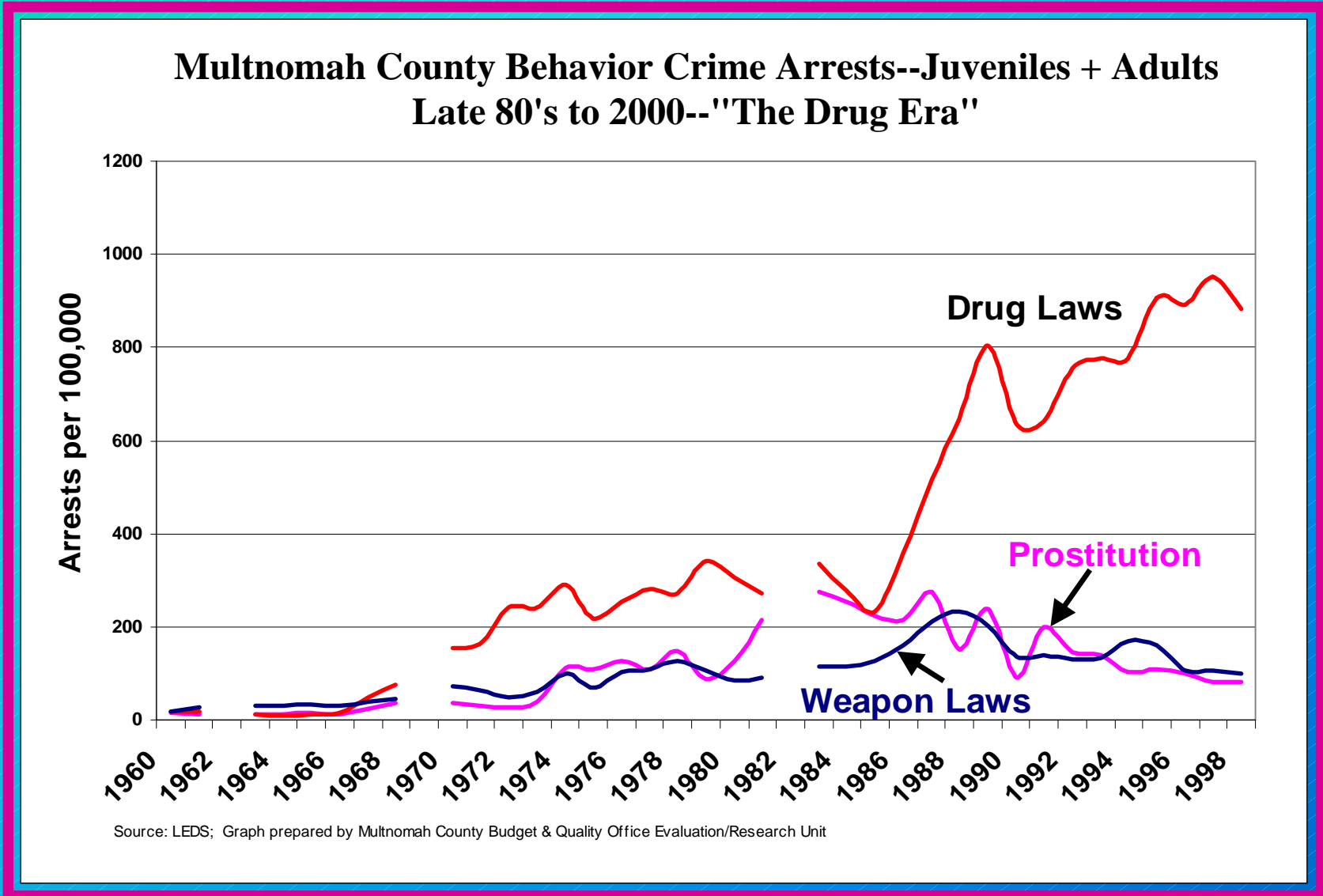
# The Nature of Behavior Crime is Changing

**Multnomah County Behavior Crime Arrests--Juveniles + Adults  
Early 70's to Early 90's--"The Era of Alcohol"**



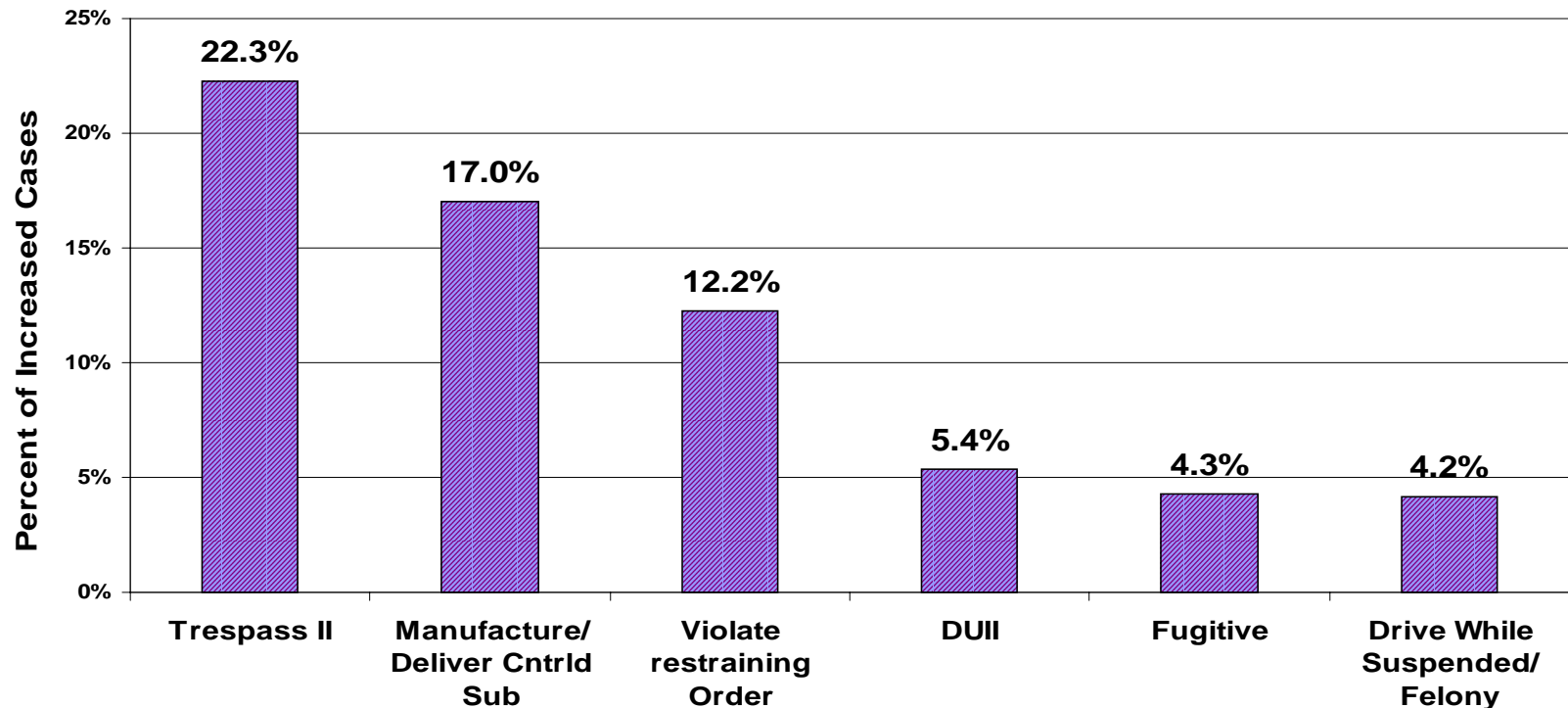
**Note the enforcement pushes of the early to mid 70's and early 90's.**

# The Nature of Behavior Crime is Changing



# How do changing crime patterns affect DA workload?

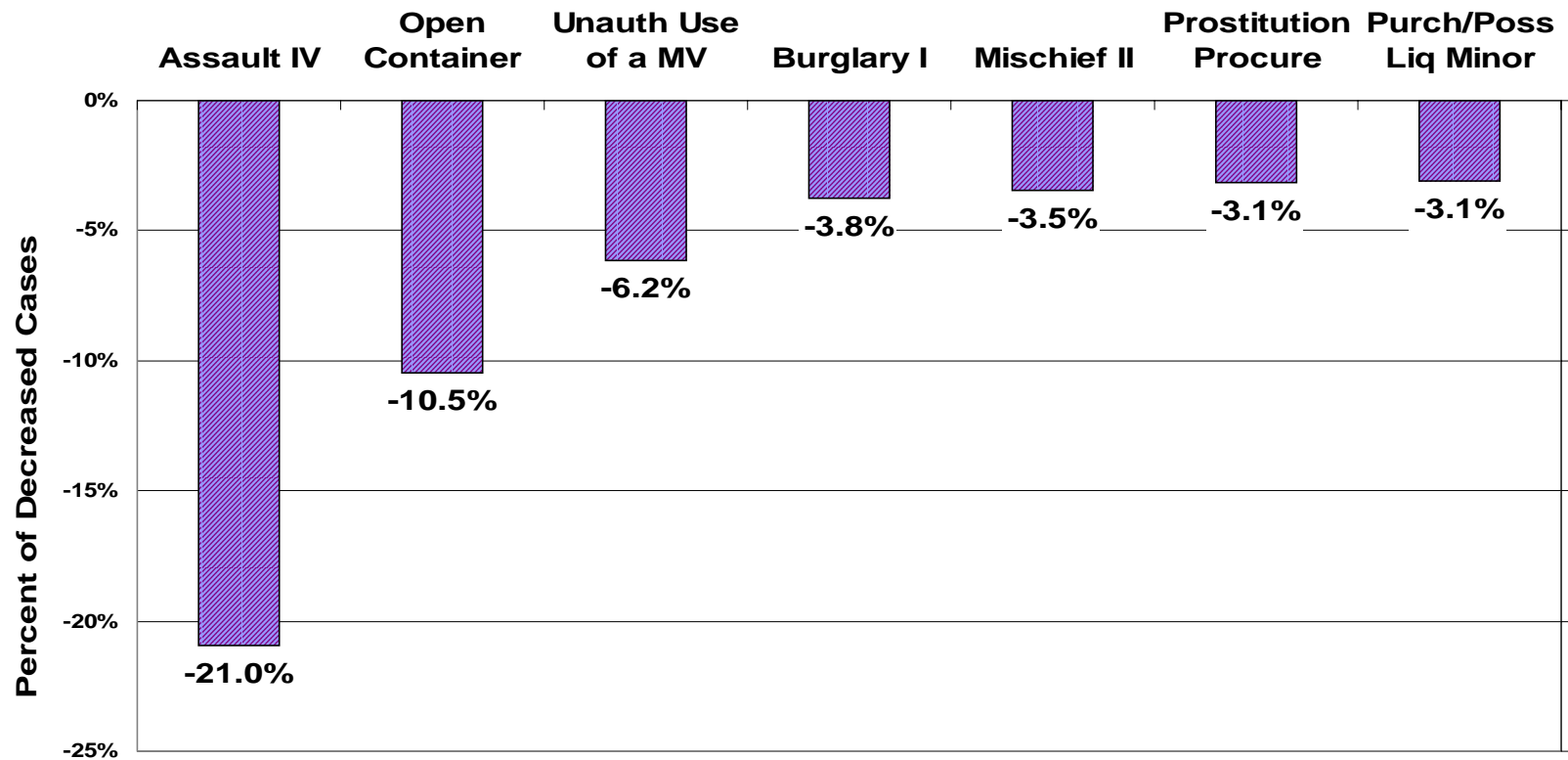
## DA Cases Received Showing Largest Increase from 1994 to 1998



**Between 1994 and 1998 some types of charges increased (+6777 cases) and some types of charges decreased (-4032 cases)----for a net increase of 2745 cases. The six charges above account for 65% of the 6777 increased cases.**

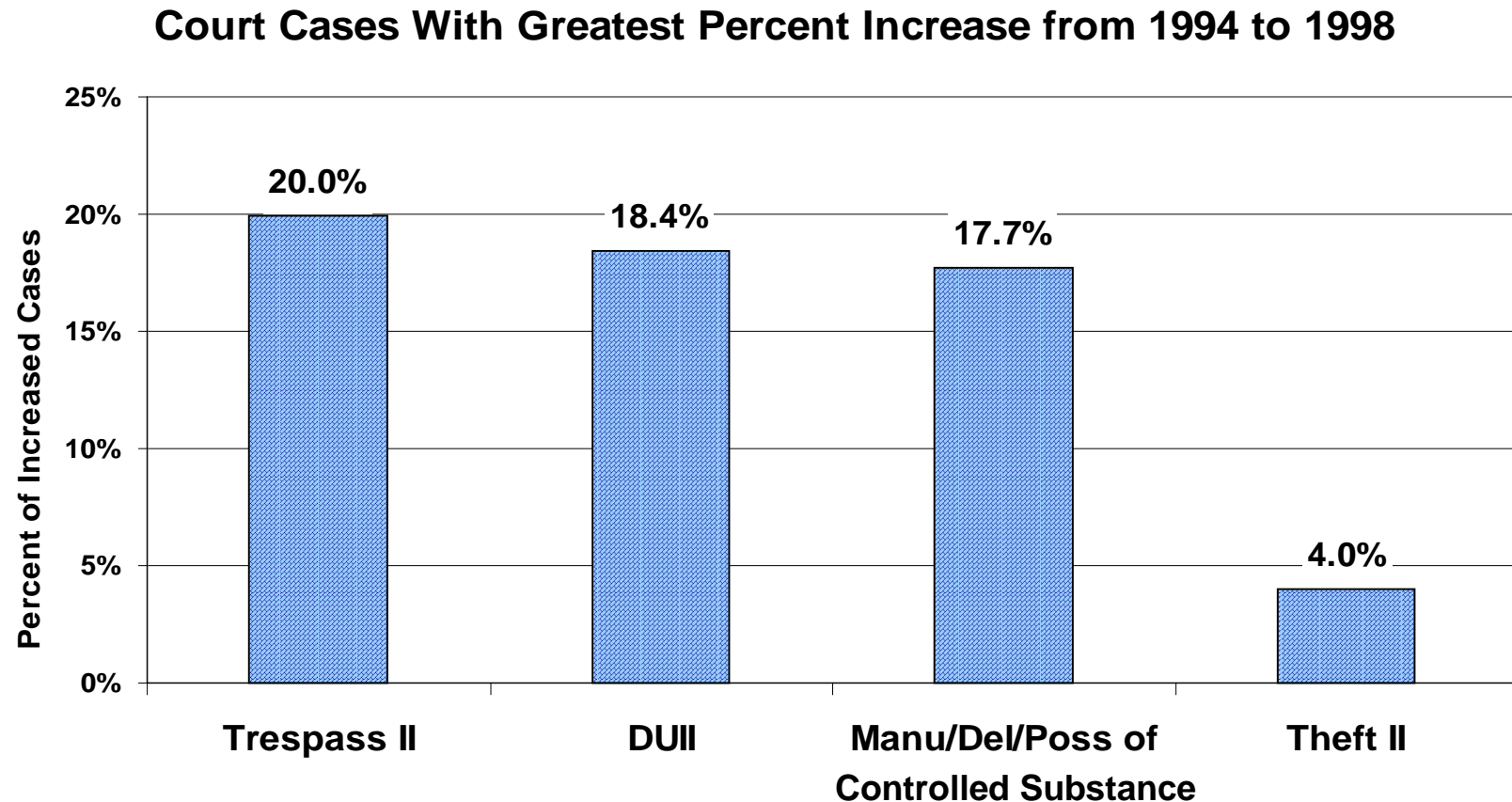
# Some types of DA cases received decreased, but not enough to offset the increases

## DA Cases Received Showing Largest Decrease from 1994 to 1998



The 7 charges above accounted for 51% of the 4,032 reduction among charges that decreased.

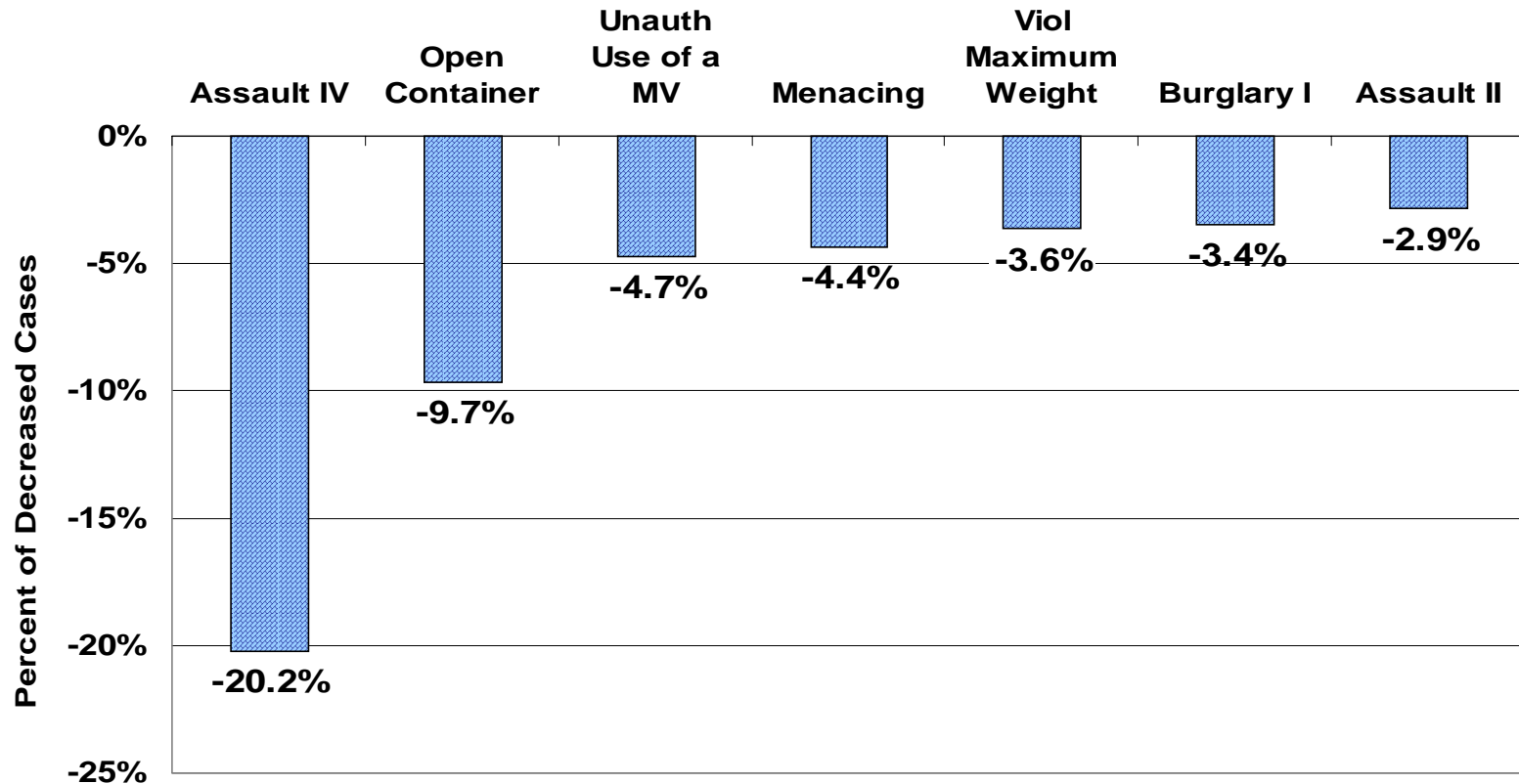
# How do changing arrest patterns affect Court workload?



**Between 1994 and 1998 some types of charges increased (+8,671 cases) and some types of charges decreased (-4,525 cases) for a net increase of 4,146 cases. The four charges above account for 60% of the 8,671 increased cases.**

# Some types of Court Cases decreased, but not enough to offset the increases

**Court Cases Started With Greatest Percent Decrease from 1994 to 1998**



**The 7 charges above accounted for 49% of the 4,525 reduction among charges that decreased.**

# Why isn't DA & Court workload going down?

- There are more cases for drug crime & associated trespass violations, DUUI and driving while suspended (DWS).
- There is an increase in DA cases for violating a restraining order and for being a fugitive.
- Decreases in assaults, burglary, and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle have not been enough to offset increases in other cases.
- These trends are, in general, consistent with declining person-to-person rates and property crime rates with increased emphasis on behavior crimes.

# What about jail use?

- The FY98-99 Jail Population Report notes a slight percentage drop in the number of felons being held with more of an increase in the percentage of misdemeanants held.
- Drug arrests are a considerable factor in increasing jail use.
- Jail use is not only driven by the number of arrests. A considerable portion of jail space is devoted to short term sanctions for probation/parole violators and to housing INS holds.
- An in-depth analysis of jail use is underway. Data system limitations have been a significant barrier.



## **In Sum, Why is Criminal Justice Workload Increasing When Crimes Rates are Dropping?**

- **Even though index crime rates are dropping, index crime accounted for only 26% of 1998 arrests.**
- **Even though total arrest rates are relatively stable, rising population increases the total number of arrests.**
- **Dropping person-to-person and property crime rates are offset by more arrests for behavior crimes--especially drug related, DUI, and driving while suspended arrests.**
- **Need for jail beds is not only related to the number of arrests. Jail beds are also needed for sanctions for offenders who do not comply with probation or post-prison-supervision requirements.**

# Recommendations of the Evaluation Committee

- Investigate more closely our policies and practices regarding behavior crime. Are current policies and practices based on national “best practices”? Are current policies resulting in the most cost-effective use of public resources?
- Consider drug crime as a LPSCC focus area during the next year.

# Future Reports to LPSCC Executive Committee

## The most urgent topics in relation to public safety levy:

- **Drug Crime and Treatment: What We Know (April 2000)**
- **Jail Use in Multnomah County (May or June 2000)**

## Other possibilities already requested or suggested by the data: (in order of what is currently available)

1. Comparison with other cities/counties
2. Victimization vs. Reported Offenses vs. Arrests
3. Juvenile vs. Adult Crime
4. In-depth focus on DUII, Driving while suspended
5. Ethnicity in relation to crime
6. Focus on mentally ill in the criminal justice system
7. In-depth focus on women in the criminal justice system