

Determinants of Length of Stay in Juvenile Detention: The Vermont Case



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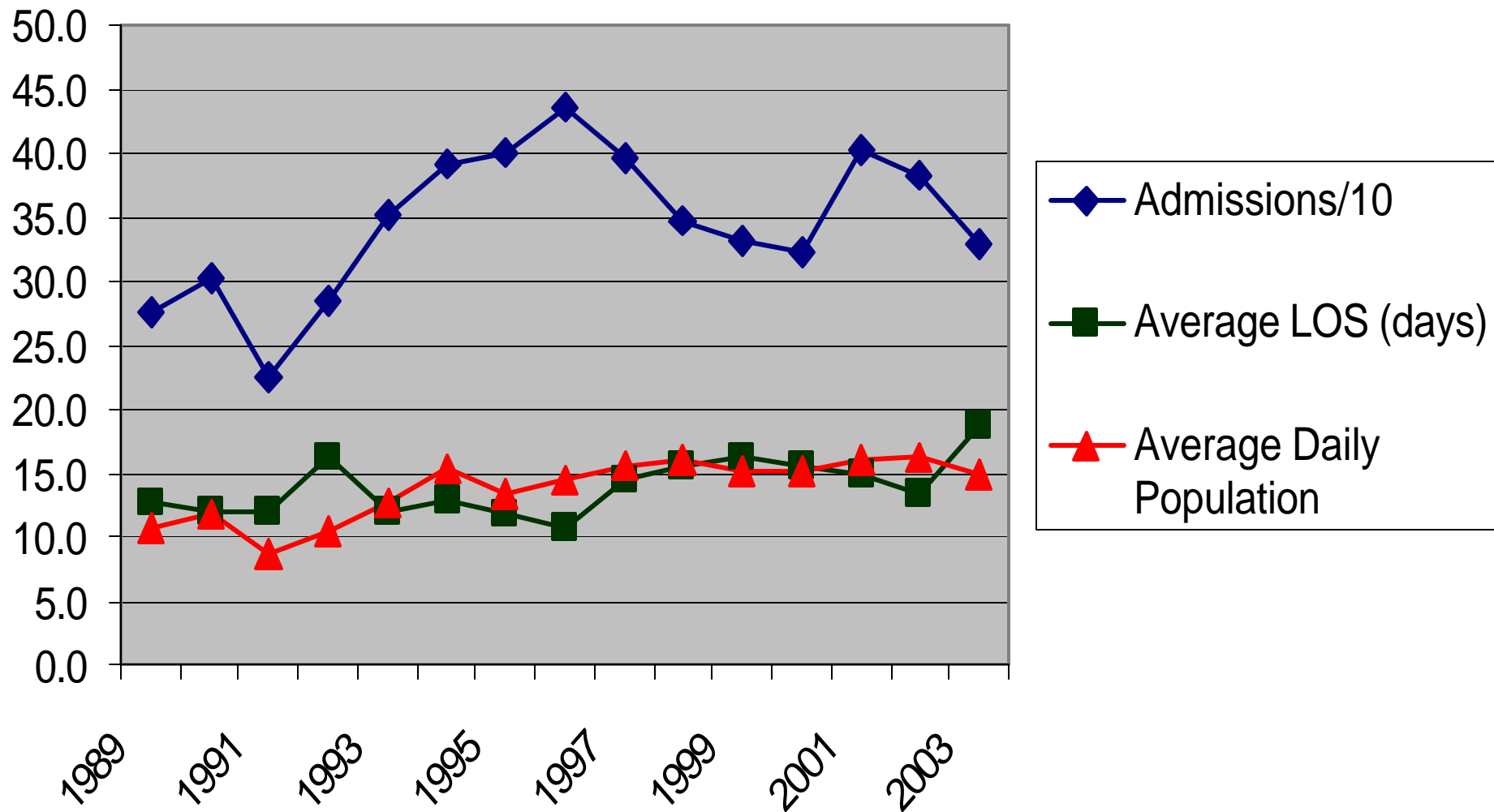
Project Background

- The Problem: Increased utilization of the states only secure juvenile facility, lack of alternatives, concerns about appropriate use
- Woodside Detention Facility
- 30 beds total (stays over 10 days/locked)
 - 18 detention
 - 12 treatment (male only)
- Other staff-secure facilities (up to 10 day stays)
 - Sandhill: 7 female
 - Mountainside: 4 beds (male or female)
 - 206 Depot Street: 5 male

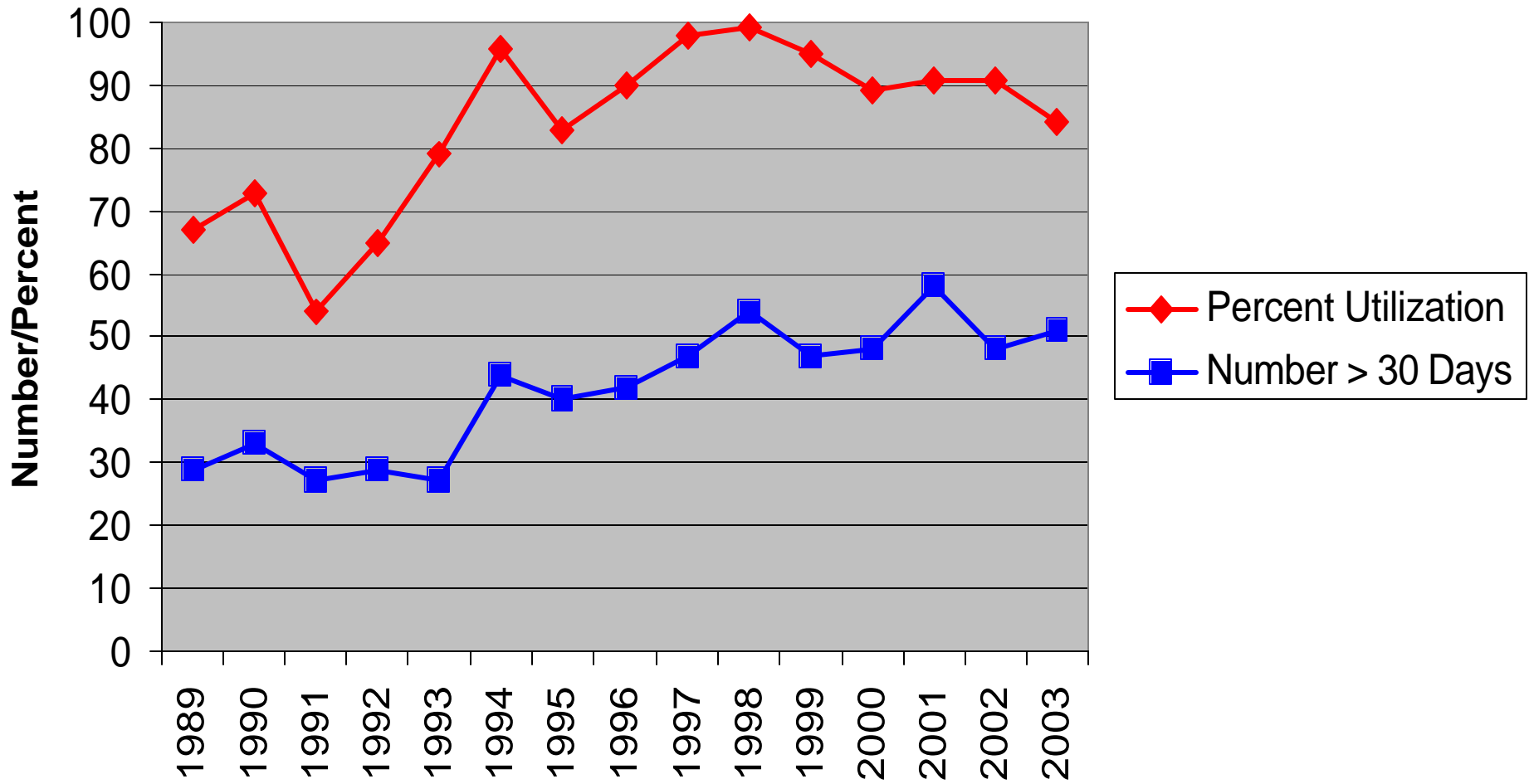
Woodside Dynamics and Trends

- Lack of defined time limits on stays
- Average length of stay increases over past decade
 - 16.3 days in 2002; 18.7 days in 2003
 - Compared to about 12 days in early 1990s
- Number of youth who stay more than 30 days almost doubled in past decade
- 328 admissions in 2003: stable and peaked at 436 in 1996
- Utilization rate has generally been at or near 100% impacting short stay bed space
- WHY?

Admissions Trends



Utilization



Method

- Qualitative Surveys
 - Caseworkers - estimated 22% response rate
 - Family Court judges – 63% response rate (n=12)
- Quantitative
 - 358 admissions between 4/1/02-3/31/03
 - Represents 251 individuals
 - Case and supervision records
 - Juvenile and Adult Court records
- Regression and content analysis

Determinants of LOS

- Inability to find appropriate less secure placement (judges and caseworkers)
- Court delays noted by judges
- Inflexible and conditional orders (e.g. evaluation)

Admission Reason

Percent

0%

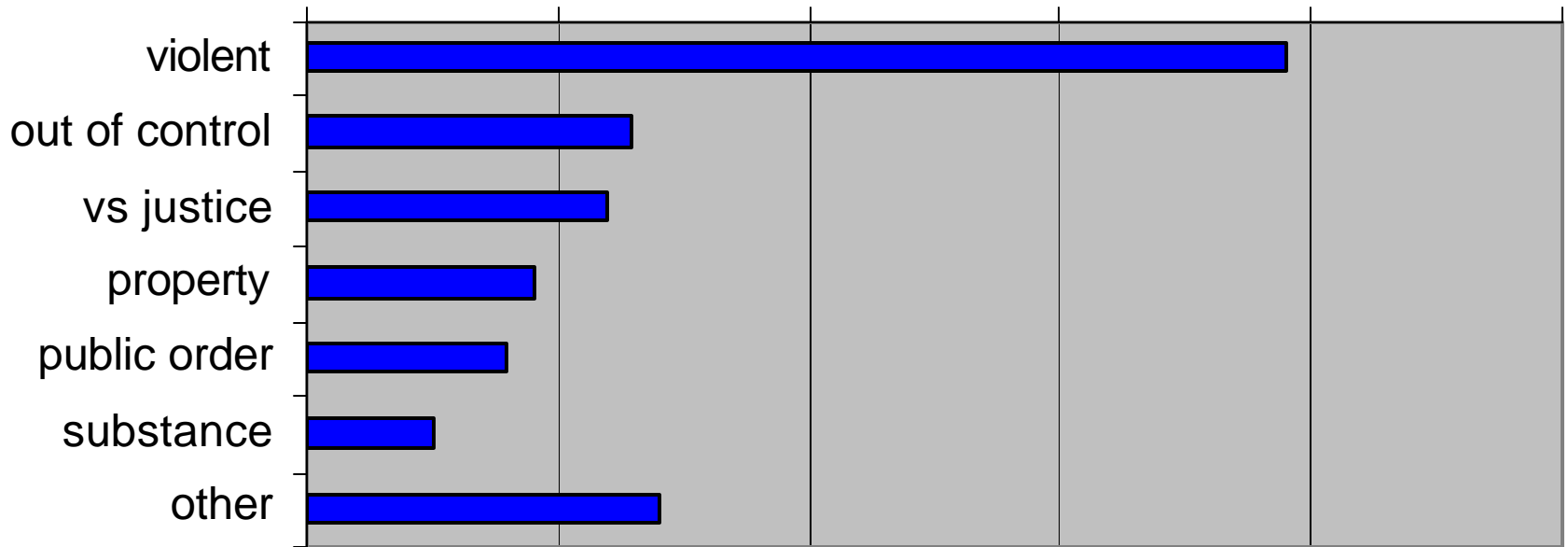
10%

20%

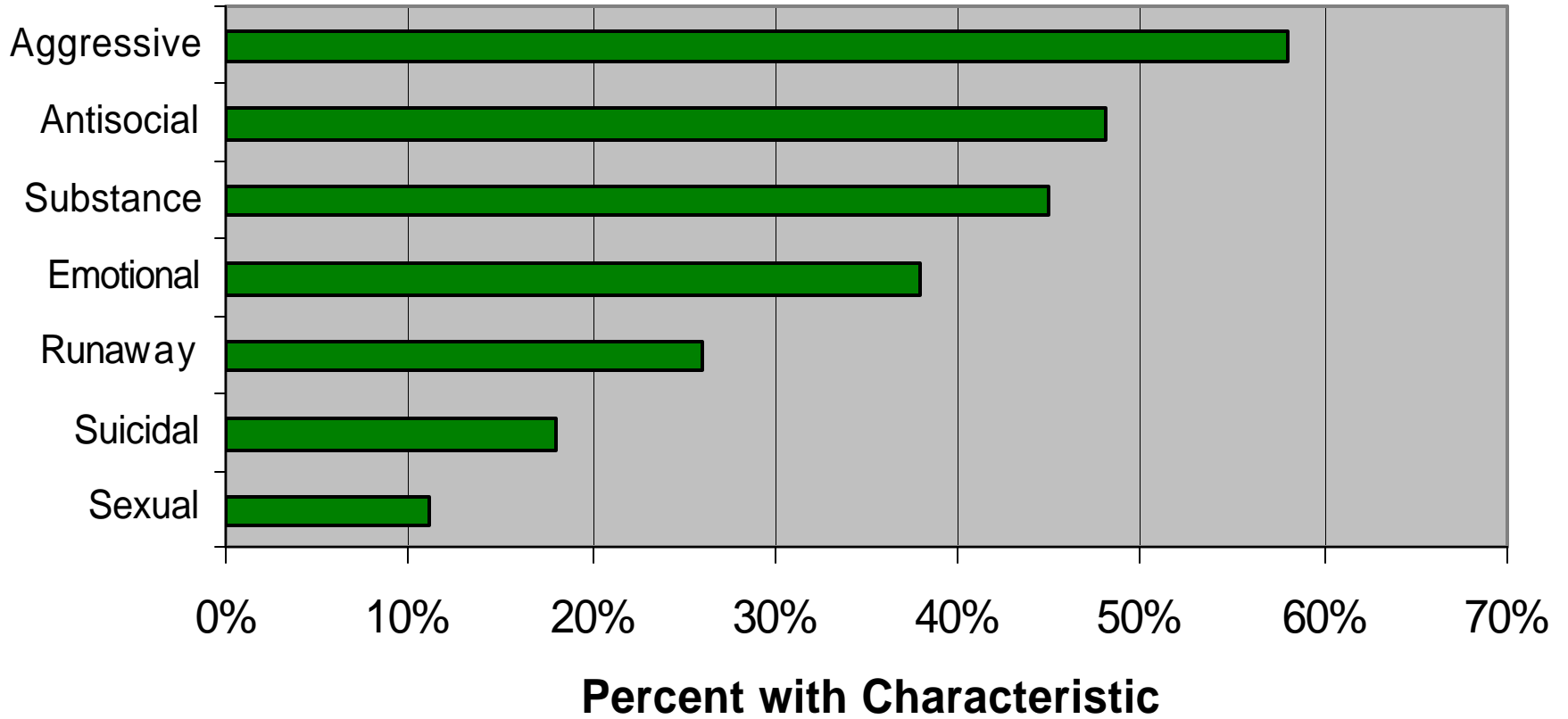
30%

40%

50%



Behavioral Characteristics

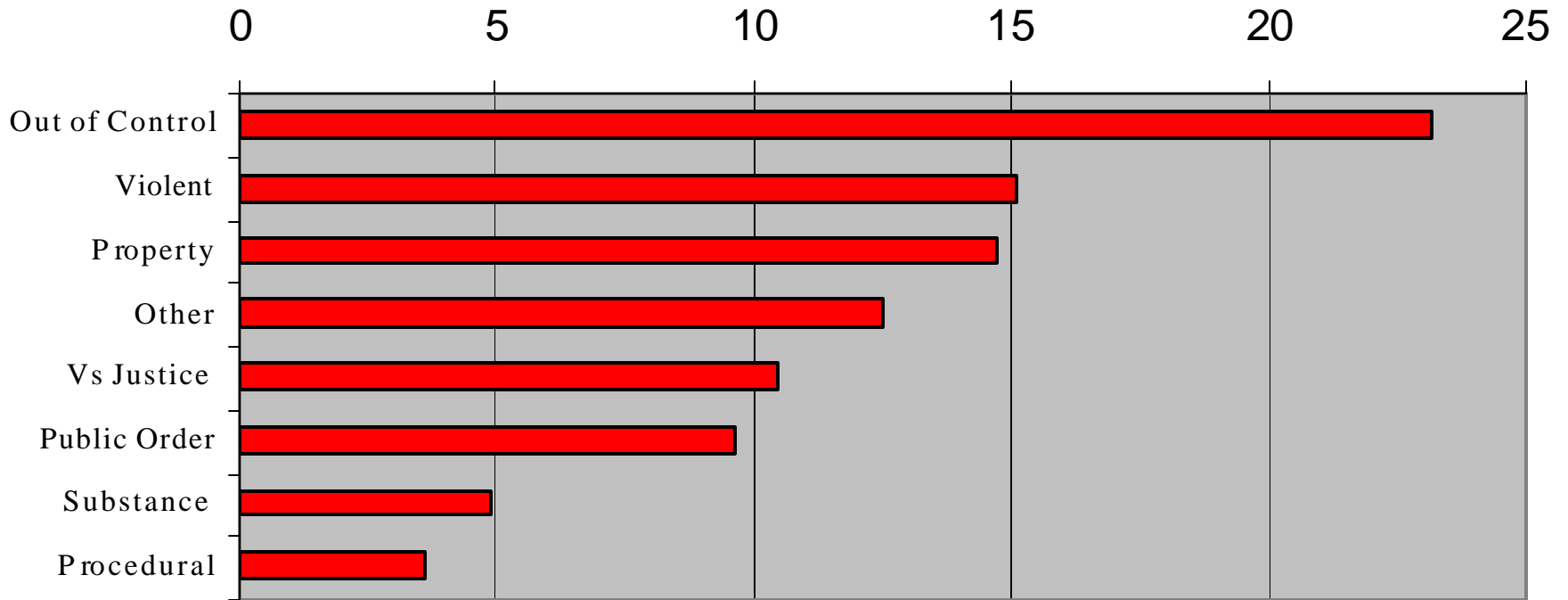


Characteristics of Woodside Admissions

- 1.5 average admissions during study period
- 79% male
- 95% white (similar to state composition)
- Distributed similar to state population
- 56% administrative admission (v court)
- Averaged 11.1 prior placements
 - Foster homes (average of 5)
 - Group homes (1.8)
 - Parental (1.5)
 - Woodside (1.4)

Average Length of Stay

Days



Length of Stay Correlates

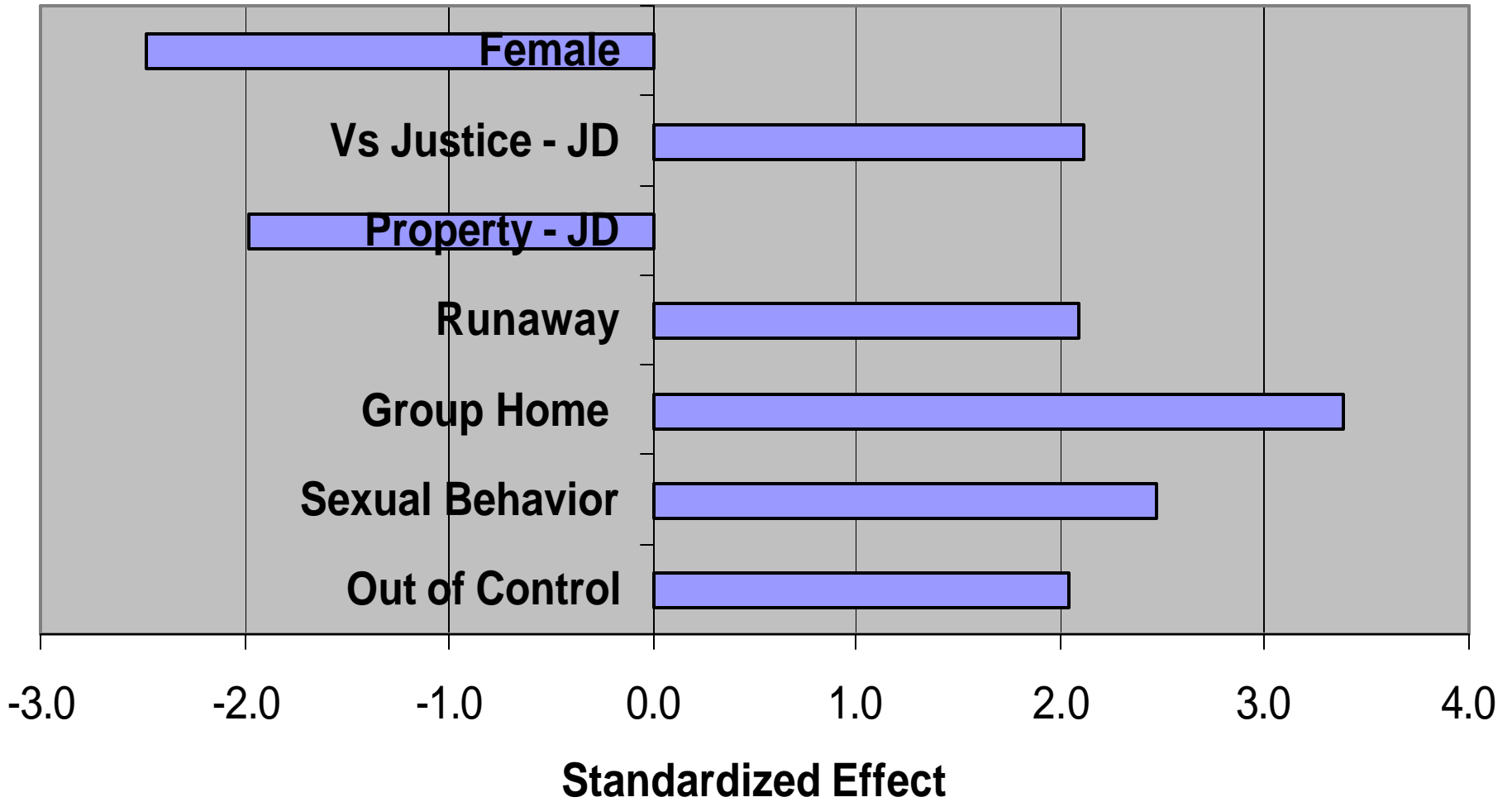
- Variation by District
 - St. Johnsbury (21.6), Hartford (24.9), Newport (25.9) highest
- Conditional and Inflexible orders 2X flexible and emergency orders
- Males (15.4) vs. Females (8.5)
- White (14.2) vs. minority (8.8)

Delinquency and Criminal Histories

	Delinquency	Criminal
Number of People	247/251	53/251
Number of Charges	1,020	195
Average # Charges	4.1	3.7

- 52% adjudicated delinquent
- 60% conviction in criminal court (82% misdemeanor)
- Crime distributions typical – property crimes

Regression of LOS



Conclusions and Implications

- Profile of youth at Woodside exhibit expected characteristics
- Range of youth use facility
- Extensive SRS history prior to Woodside
- Predictors of LOS indicate legal process or court history not primary drivers
- More options needed for Caseworkers and Courts
- Better clinical assessment and admission criteria: circumstantial at present