

# THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

## **Letters: Want to prevent juvenile crime? Instill young people with basic values**

by Mike Weinberger, Apr 5, 2019

In her letter claiming juvenile crime is down, Rachel Gassert unfairly attacked Orleans Parish DA Leon Cannizzaro for his “severe treatment of young people.” Really? Exactly what should be done with a 17-year-old who sticks a gun in your face and demands your wallet? Gassert does not say. Instead, she criticizes the DA because he is trying to place this person in jail.

Although I respect Gassert’s efforts to fight for what she calls “children’s rights,” I believe her position is wrong. Cannizzaro is not treating “young people severely,” as Gassert claims, but rather, is responding appropriately when a teenager robs someone, assaults someone, or, as happens all too frequently nowadays, shoots someone.

On the other hand, I agree wholeheartedly with Gassert when she says we must “start doing what actually works” when dealing with the problem of teenage crime. In my opinion, what actually works is raising young people with these values: respect for your elders, hard work, honesty, individual responsibility and diligence. Unfortunately, government policies and many private groups do not support these values anymore. Instead, they focus solely on empathy.

The policy of merely showing empathy for young criminals, however, is simply not working. What we need now is tough love. Young people must learn that society has rules, and that there are penalties when you violate them.

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