



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | JUSTICE LAB

**Raise the Age (RtA):
Planning for the Expansion of the WA
Juvenile Justice System**

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PCJJ Raise the Age Workgroup
February 14, 2024

**Emerging
Adult
Justice
Project**

eajustice.org


The Emerging Adult Justice Project

Who we are:

Research institute within the Columbia Justice Lab dedicated to informing and driving developmentally appropriate and equitable justice responses that support and appreciate young people on their paths to adulthood.

What we do:

- Publish and promote high-impact research reports defining the challenges facing emerging adults and innovative approaches to address those challenges
- Provide research and guidance to localities enacting change in their justice systems
- Partner with specific sites to assess and implement reforms

The logo for the Emerging Adult Justice Project is contained within a blue rectangular border. The text "Emerging Adult Justice Project" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, stacked vertically in four lines.

**Emerging
Adult
Justice
Project**

Burgeoning Field of Emerging Adult Justice

- *Who, what, how and why?*
- Applying research to practice

Who Are Emerging Adults?

- 18-25 years old
- Still developing (psychologically and neurologically) and share many of the same characteristics of younger peers
 - **Hot cognition** (developed by late 20s) vs. **Cold cognition** (developed earlier/teens)
 - Susceptible to peer influence, impulsive, less future-oriented, and prone to risk-taking
 - More pronounced if history of trauma and brain injuries
 - Uniquely vulnerable (high levels of victimization, mental health disorders, and substance use)
 - Also, uniquely malleable to and capable of positive change



*"Young man, go to your room and stay there
until your cerebral cortex matures."*

Sociological Research

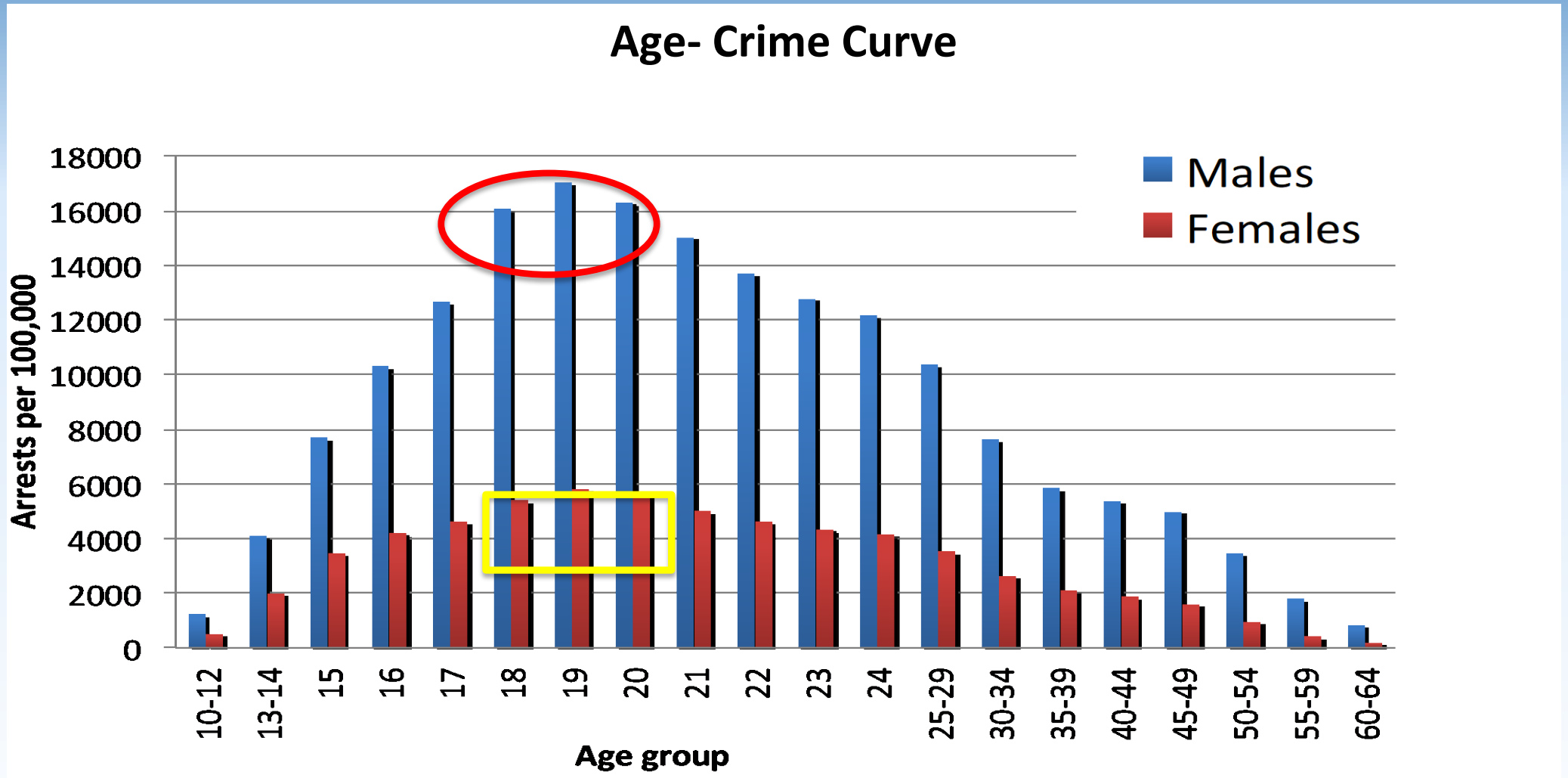
Indicates that youth must cross developmental “bridges” to mature out of delinquency. These “bridges” have been elongated due to social and economic changes.

- Meaningful employment
- Marriage/trusting relationships

Elements of desistance has shown need for:

- Role models/mentors
- Finding self in a role as a helper/giver
- Having changes (improvements) in behavior recognized

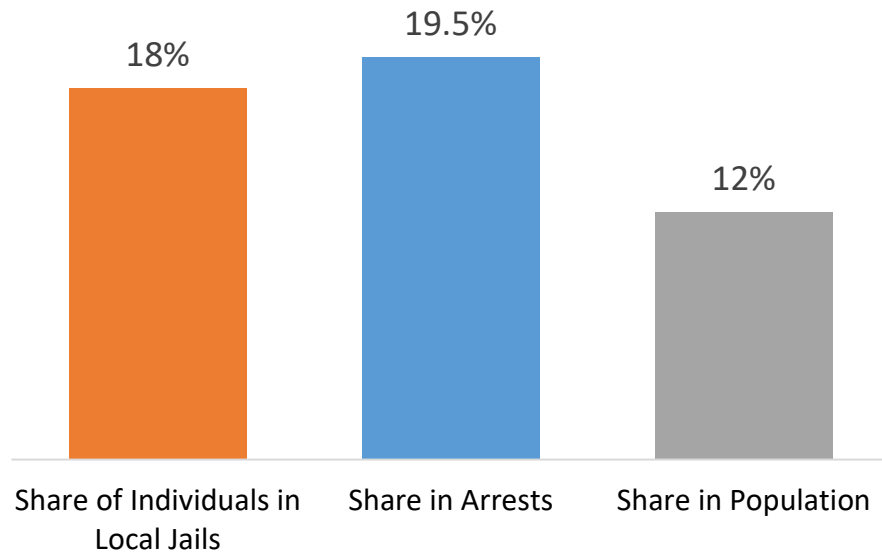
Most emerging adults “age out” of crime by 25



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Report

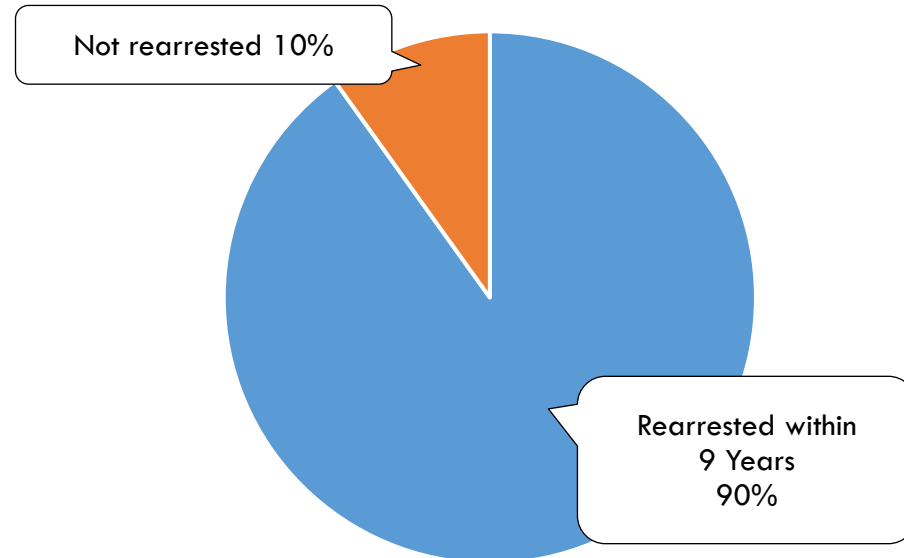
Emerging Adults: Disproportionate Share in Adult Criminal Legal System & Highest Recidivism Rates

Disproportionality of Justice Involvement Among 18-24-year-olds (CO 2020)



Sources: Office of Justice Programs, Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center

9-Year Rearrest Rates 18-to 24-year-olds, U.S.A. (2005 Release Cohort)



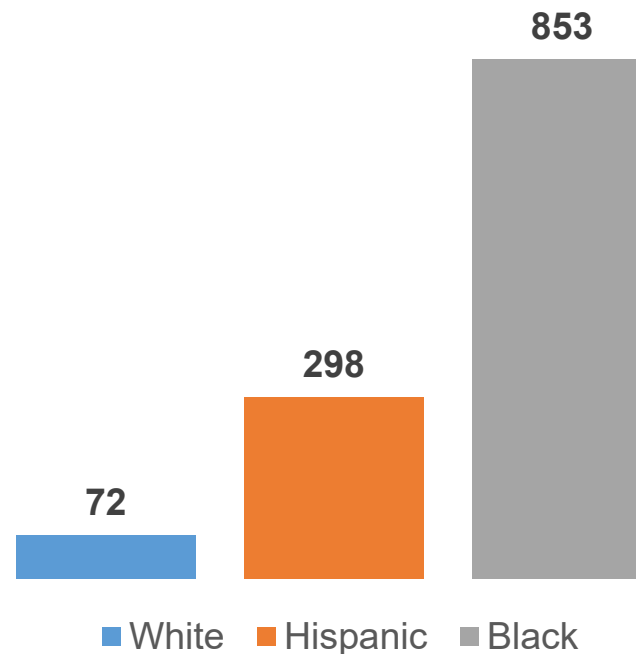
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Racial and ethnic disparities of emerging adults in the criminal justice system are stark

- Black male 18-to 24-year-olds compromised 42% of all emerging adults admitted to state and federal prisons in the U.S.A. in 2016.
- Racial and ethnic disparities are highest for younger cohorts (ages 18-19). Black males ages 18-19 are **11.8 times more likely than their White peers to be incarcerated.**

Incarceration Rates by Race and Ethnicity

per 100,000 18-to 19-year-old Males,
United States, 2016



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. "Prisoners in 2016."

Source: *Prisoners in 2012: Trends in Admissions and Releases, 1991–2012*, NCJ 243920. Data Source: National Corrections Reporting Program yearend census records, National Prisoner Statistics program.

Justice involvement **delays and prevents** achievement of key developmental milestones.

A conviction is a barrier to:

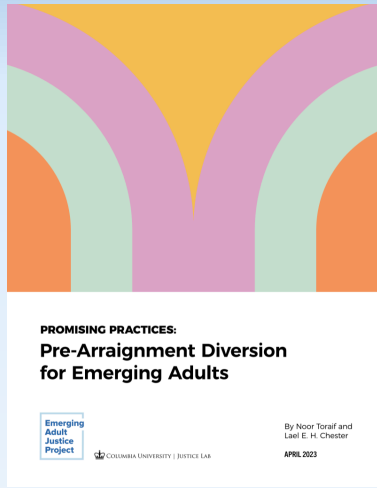
- ❖ **Employment:** A felony record cut the employer response rate by half for white male applicants and nearly 2/3 for Black male applicants.
- ❖ **Housing:** Felony convictions restricts access to subsidized housing benefits. Screening for criminal records for rental housing in the private market.
- ❖ **Education:** >90% of college admission officials surveyed consider any felony conviction as particularly negative.
- ❖ **Interferes with elements of desistance**

Emerging Adult Justice (EAJ)

- Creating fair, effective and **developmentally appropriate** services, programs and opportunities for EAs
- Strengths-based, growth-focused approaches

Positive EA outcomes = PUBLIC SAFETY

Specialized PRACTICES



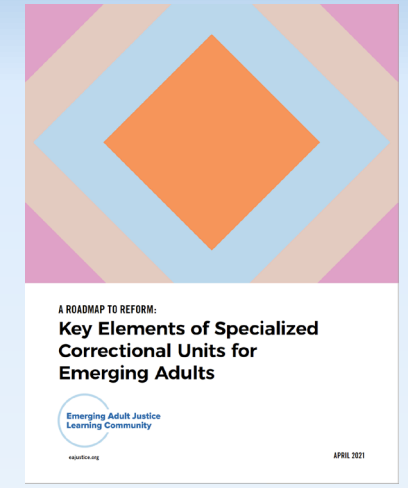
DIVERSION



COURTS



PROBATION



CORRECTIONS

Specialized **POLICIES/LAWS**

- **Expanding the juvenile justice system**

RtA is being implemented now in VT

Proposals have been made in CA, CO, CT, IL, MA, NE VA and WA

- **Expanding or creating hybrid systems (often called “youthful offender laws”) – a 3rd justice system**

e.g., MI’s Holmes Youth Training Act & DC’s Youth Rehabilitation Act

- **Reforming the adult criminal legal system**

e.g., expungement, parole/resentencing

Innovation sites Implementing a new developmental framework

Nebraska

Probation/ Community
Supervision

Washington DC

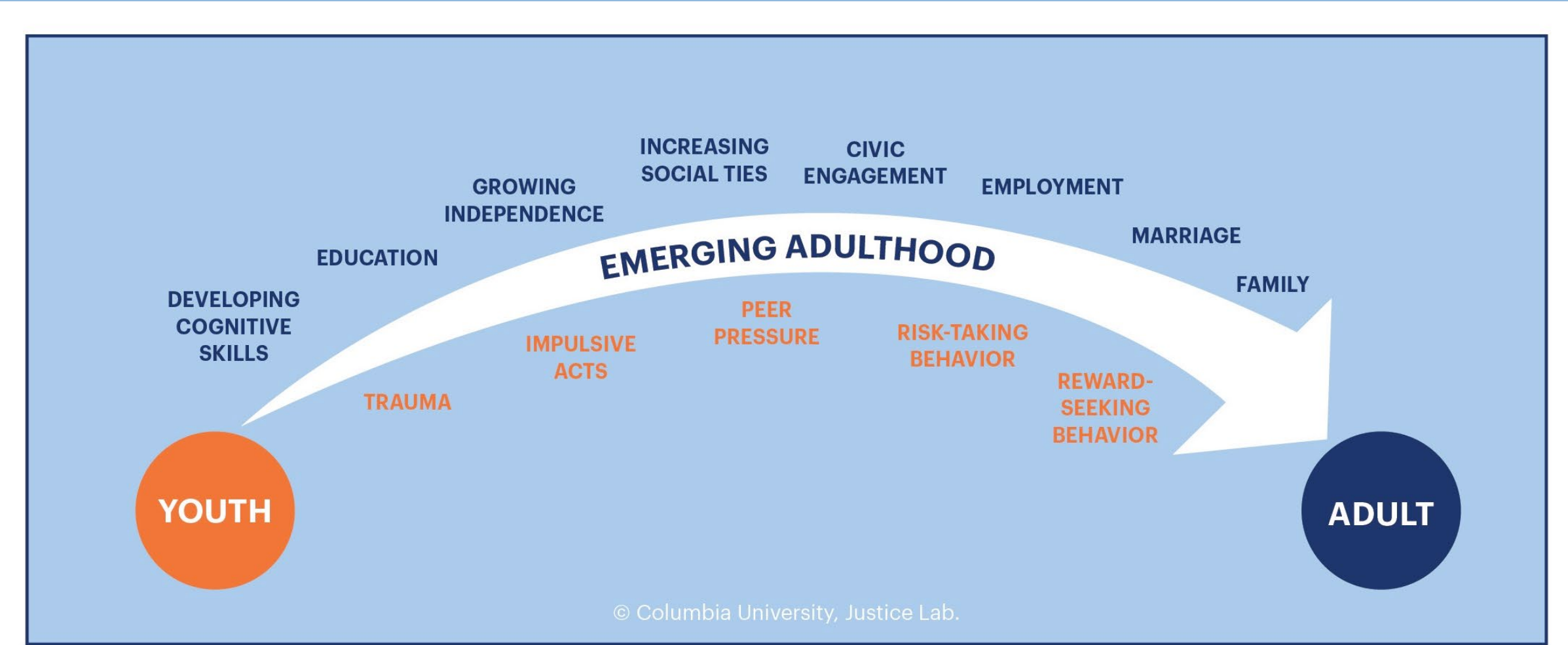
Community Continuum of
Services

Massachusetts

Indigent Defense



Developmental factors and milestones in transition to adulthood



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QUESTIONS?

Thank you!