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(Neb.)-State Chief Justice Touts Juvenile Pilot Program

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 01/17/2013 11:14 AM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - The Nebraska Supreme Court's chief justice says a state pilot program designed to treat delinquent juveniles without making them state wards appears to be working.

Chief Justice Michael Heavican told lawmakers Thursday that the pilot program has treated 600 juveniles since July 1. Heavican says about 80 percent of them have completed probation successfully, a higher percentage than the statewide average.

The results were based on three pilot projects established in Scottsbluff, North Platte, and Omaha. Heavican says 80 percent of the youths who participated were able to remain in their family homes, without being institutionalized.

Lawmakers established the project last year during an overhaul of child welfare services.

Heavican made the remarks in his annual State of the Judiciary address to lawmakers at the Capitol.