

RAISE the AGE | NY

February 6, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write in full support of the proposed budget legislation (Public Protection Bill, Part G), which rescinds statutory authority for Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) operated Adolescent Offender facilities and transfers custody of Adolescent Offenders to the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) by October 1, 2020.

This important change is consistent with the spirit of Raise the Age, ensuring that adolescents sentenced to incarceration in the Youth Part of criminal court are placed in age-appropriate settings designed and staffed to serve and care for youth. This includes providing educational and vocational training, mental health services, and counseling.¹ Services in these settings are trauma-informed and treatment-based. OCFS secure facilities also engage family members and other significant adults in a young person's life to encourage growth while incarcerated and pave the way for successful community re-entry. The proposed legislation is also essential because it will ensure that adolescents have the protections of developmentally appropriate OCFS rules and regulations, which prohibit the use of extended isolation and solitary confinement.²

We believe that enacting this proposed legislation will bolster New York's successful implementation of Raise the Age, promote public safety and help guide adolescents to a successful return to our communities. We look forward to continuing to work with you to build on the success of Raise the Age and advance youth justice for children and young adults in New York.

Sincerely,

Campaign for Youth Justice
Children's Defense Fund-New York
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.
Families Together in New York State
Fund for Modern Courts
New York County Defender Services

Center for Community Alternatives
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Westchester Children's Association
Youth Represent
Y Vote

¹ FY 2020 N.Y. State Executive Budget, Public Protection and General Government, Article VII Legislation, Part G, Sec. 4.

² See *id.*; 9 NYCRR Sec. 168, *et seq.*