

RAISE the AGE | NY

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

February 5, 2018

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As members of the Raise the Age-NY Campaign, we played an instrumental role in ensuring that your administration would successfully secure passage of this historic legislation in last year's budget and we value our continued partnership throughout the planning and implementation stages.

We support the Executive Budget proposal for \$100 million for Raise the Age expenses and \$50 million additional capital, but we are deeply concerned that the lack of specificity regarding the distribution of these resources and the cuts to New York City's Close to Home program and preventive services funding stream, will impede New York City and other counties from effectively implementing Raise the Age. We urge you to rectify this in the upcoming 30-day amendments.

First, we are concerned that the proposed \$100 million investment in Raise the Age expenses lacks any specificity with regard to county allocations and/or the services funded. The proposed budget would require counties to submit raise the age implementation plans by April 1st, meaning that the funding will be allocated after the budget process is concluded. There is then no way for advocates or the legislature to weigh in on the sufficiency of the funding and/or the distribution of funds. Services including but not limited to detention, probation, transportation and training, as well as health, mental health, and educational supports in and out of placement will need to be provided throughout the state. We are concerned that the lack of transparency and opportunity for comment could mean that not all counties will have the resources they need.

Notably, we also remain deeply concerned that New York City may not be able to access the Raise the Age funding because it may not meet funding requirements. As you know, the Raise the Age statute requires counties to either remain within the 2% property tax cap or demonstrate financial hardship to be reimbursed.

In addition, the Executive Budget also proposes to eliminate **ALL** state funding for the Close to Home program, which is the juvenile justice placement program currently in place for youth whose charges were committed before their 16th birthday. Given the goal of treating youth in the juvenile justice system effectuated by Raise the Age, many of the court-involved 16 and 17 year olds will soon transition into the Close to Home system. It is therefore even harder to

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understand why the state would propose to eliminate all of the \$41.4 million in state funds authorized for Close to Home. In short, with this proposal, the state would be abdicating all of its responsibilities for youth in the City's juvenile justice system, including those who enter it after the implementation of Raise the Age.

Finally, a critical component of the City's successful implementation of Close to Home and its ability to reduce the populations in both detention and placement has been the City's ability to tap into the State's preventive services funding stream, which reimburses counties at a rate of 62%. These funds have allowed the City to develop a continuum of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs that prevent youth from being placed in non-secure placement (which is a type of foster care program.) These services, which have been supported by the state and the city, have enabled youth to remain with their families while receiving the services and supports they need to set their lives on the right track. The Executive Budget proposes to cap this child welfare services/preventive services funding stream for New York City. In addition to preventing the City from receiving a state share for investing in innovative program, it also eliminates state support for new preventive programming aimed at 16 and 17 year olds.

In sum, the lack of clarity about the Raise the Age funding leaves us worried about the success of Raise the Age implementation across the state. The cut to Close to Home, cap on preventive services and the uncertainty about Raise the Age funding leaves us further concerned about New York City's ability to successfully implement Raise the Age and ensure successful services are developed to replace Rikers Island and keep more youth in their communities. **We urge you to a) rescind the proposal to cap the state share of child welfare services (protective, preventive, independent living and adoption administration) for New York City; b) rescind the proposal to eliminate all state funding for Close to Home; and c) ensure all counties, including NYC, have resources needed to implement Raise the Age.**

While we appreciate the need for the State to be fiscally prudent, successful implementation of Raise the Age is imperative for all of us who have fought hard in support of this legislation and for the youth and families it will impact. We urge you to retract these harmful cuts, and provide more clarity about Raise the Age funding, in the upcoming 30 day amendments.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Quality Education
The Black Institute
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for Children's Initiatives
Center for Community Alternatives, Inc.
Center for Family Representation
Central Synagogue
Child and Family Services (of Buffalo, NY)

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The Children's Agenda

Children's Aid

Children's Defense Fund – New York

The Children's Village

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.

Coalition for Asian American Children and Families

The Coalition for Behavioral Health, Inc.

Coalition for the Homeless

The Correctional Association of New York

Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA)

Court Appointed Advocates of New York City

The Door- A Center of Alternatives, Inc.

Drama Club

Every Child Matters

Families On The Move of New York City, Inc.

Families Together in New York State

Finger Lakes Parent Network, Inc.

Forestdale

The Fortune Society Inc.

FPWA

Fund for Modern Courts

Good Shepherd Services

Graham Windham

The Incarcerated Nation Corporation

Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club

JustLeadershipUSA

Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State

Lawyers for Children

Leake and Watts Services, Inc.

Legal Action Center

Legal Aid Society

Long Island Progressive Coalition

National Association of Social Workers – New York State Chapter

National Juvenile Justice Network

New Hour for Women and Children LI

The New York Foundling

New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault

New York State Council of Churches

Northern Rivers

NYS American Academy of Pediatrics, Chapters 1, 2 & 3

NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health

NYS Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare

NYS Kinship Navigator

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Prevent Child Abuse New York
Reform Jewish Voice of New York State
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
SCO Family of Services
Sheltering Arms
SparkAction
S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc.
United Neighborhood Houses
Westchester Children's Association
Women's City Club of New York
Youth Represent

CC:

Alphonso David, Counsel to the Governor
Melissa de Rosa, Secretary to the Governor
Robert Mujica, Budget Director
Paul Francis, Deputy Secretary for Health and Human Services