

RAISE the AGE | NY

Final Budget Closes 2 Youth Prisons and Restores Cuts to Services, Misses Opportunity for More Closures and Community Reinvestment

Next Steps Should Include More Facility Closures and Targeted Community Reinvestment to Support Alternatives to Youth Incarceration

April 8, 2021. Members of the Raise the Age NY Coalition applaud the Legislature and the Governor for reaching an agreement in the final state budget to restore proposed cuts to youth services and to close two juvenile placement facilities, reducing the State's investment in youth incarceration. Closing these youth prisons is another step in New York's youth justice reform and its commitment to racial equity.

The final budget fails to reinvest the millions of dollars of savings associated with these closures and missed the opportunity to close two additional youth prisons on the accelerated timeline included in the executive budget proposal. With the annual costs of state-operated facilities [approaching \\$900,000](#) per child per year, young people and community stakeholders have better ideas for these funds.

Closing youth prisons leads to decarceration by reducing the number of beds that courts can use to place youth and steering the system toward keeping youth in communities. Between 2007 and 2013, the State closed 23 youth facilities and reduced its residential capacity by more than 1,000 beds, which was part of a steep reduction in youth justice placements that continued for a decade. A new fund was created (the Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program) to push more state dollars into counties to support prevention, alternatives to detention/placement and reentry supports. We are committed to working with the Office of Children and Family Services and champions in the legislature to close more youth prisons and ensure that the savings are reinvested in communities.

We also appreciate that the final budget continues to set-aside \$250 million for Raise the Age implementation, and restores proposed cuts to the Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) and Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program that support youth to prevent contact with the criminal legal system, and to better serve youth who may be court-involved.

As we move forward with the legislative session ahead, we will continue to center diversion, community reinvestment and second chances for youth with legislation that raises the lower age for juvenile delinquency to 12 and expands youthful offender protections. To learn more, visit: RaiseTheAgeNY.org.