



January 20, 2026

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Statement on the Hochul Administration Declining to Include Regressive Changes to Raise the Age in New York's FY2027 Budget Unveiling

(ALBANY, NY) — [**The Coalition to Protect Raise The Age: Build Futures, Invest In Youth**](#) issued the following statement in response to the Hochul Administration's decision not to include regressive changes to Raise the Age in the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget unveiling:

“We welcome this announcement from Governor Hochul, and we urge the Administration and the Legislature to leave Raise the Age untouched throughout this session.

“Since its implementation, Raise the Age has been a proven success, moving New York away from the dubious distinction of having the lowest age of automatic adult criminal responsibility in the nation — a distinction previously shared only with North Carolina. Raise the Age reflects what we know to be true: adolescents are children, and prosecuting and placing them in the adult criminal justice system does not work for young people or make communities safer.

“But Albany must work to ensure that the nearly \$1 billion in state funds allocated to support New York’s landmark Raise the Age law — funding that remains unspent — is made more readily accessible to localities so this transformational law can fully deliver on its promise. Lawmakers must also codify the Youth Justice Innovation Fund to create additional pathways for unspent state dollars to reach community-based organizations that provide the supports and services young people need to avoid system contact, or get out and stay out of the system.

“New Yorkers do not want rollbacks that criminalize more children or drag our state backwards. Rolling back Raise the Age is not the path forward — and it should not be what Albany focuses on during these trying times.”

Background

The Coalition represents more than 220 organizations from across the state and is committed to preserving New York’s landmark Raise the Age law, combating misinformation, and promoting investments in youth that deliver true community safety statewide.

In April 2017, Albany enacted historic legislation raising the age a person is automatically prosecuted as an adult in New York to 18. Before that, [New York had the shameful distinction](#) of being one of only two states in the country — along with North Carolina — to charge *all* 16- and 17-year-olds in adult criminal court, subjecting teenagers who were not even eligible to vote to permanent criminal records and adult prison sentences.

Since the law went into effect in 2018, Raise the Age has advanced a more just and effective approach to youth accountability. The law emphasizes rehabilitation, education, and community-based alternatives that give many young people the opportunity to change course while promoting lasting public safety. [Decades of data show](#) that treating children as adults in the criminal legal system does not reduce crime or violence. Additionally, data from New York City show that, year after year, children under 18 are responsible for a smaller share of violent crime than they were a decade ago — before the Raise the Age law took effect.

Last month, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice released a report showing that youth ages 16 and 17 - the only age group affected by New York's Raise the Age law - [are not driving crime trends](#). Since 2018, the share of felony and violent felony arrests attributable to young people has remained stable, even as overall arrest numbers have fluctuated. Youth are also reoffending at rates at or below pre-Raise the Age levels. These findings reinforce what we see every day in our work: when young people receive services and programming, they are supported and engaged, and public safety is enhanced.

The Raise the Age law ensures that [young people accused of serious offenses are still held accountable](#). All felony cases against 16- and 17-year-olds begin in adult criminal court. Cases involving allegations of significant physical injury, display of a deadly weapon, or sexual offenses — or where the judge finds “extraordinary circumstances” — remain in adult court, where adult sentencing applies. And for youth prosecuted for serious offenses in family court, judges can impose a range of potential dispositions including incarceration.

In addition to more than 220 groups statewide that support the law, [Mayor Zohran Mamdani](#) and leaders in law enforcement — including [Kings County District Attorney Eric Gonzalez](#) — also oppose regressive changes to Raise the Age.

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