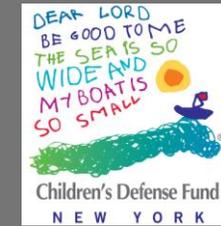


# WHY NEW YORK NEEDS COMPREHENSIVE JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM NOW!



## Did You Know?

- New York is one of only two states that prosecute youth as adults when they turn 16.
- Each year, more than 600 kids ages 13 to 15 are also prosecuted in adult criminal courts—often seriously diminishing their life prospects before they've even entered high school!

## Why Should We Raise The Age?

There is much consensus on the reasons we need to raise the age in New York, including:

- **brain development research** – youth act impulsively but are more capable of changing their behavior.
- **criminal records** – create incredible barriers to a healthy and productive life, and
- **public safety** – is not served best by prosecuting youth as adults. Rikers alone houses more than 800 16-, 17-, and 18-year-olds every day at great risk to their physical and mental well-being.

## New York's Approach to Raising the Age Must Include:

- Raising the age of criminal responsibility for all youth; if we only raise the age for 16- & 17-year-olds charged with non-violent offenses too many youth charged with crimes defined as violent felonies will still struggle with the lifelong consequences of criminal records.
- Changing our juvenile offender law so that youth as young as 13-15 years old cannot be prosecuted as adults for certain crimes.
- No longer allowing youth to be held in Rikers Island or upstate adult jails.
- Nowhere in the research is there evidence that youth charged with violent crimes are any different than youth charged with non-violent crimes. They are just as receptive to treatment as are youth who have been charged with different crimes. They should not be left to face abuse in the adult system, to spend a lifetime dealing with the consequences of a criminal record acquired as a child. They should not be left behind in New York's reform efforts.

## The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Leave

No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.



**Youth Represent** is a youth defense and advocacy non-profit organization. Our mission is to ensure that young people affected by the criminal or juvenile justice system are afforded every opportunity to reclaim lives of dignity, self-fulfillment, and engagement in their communities. We provide comprehensive legal representation, community support, education, and policy advocacy.

We are members of the **Take Back Our Children Alliance**—a statewide group of community-based organizations, advocates, lawyers, parents, and people impacted by the justice system. TBOCA members know public safety & the well-being of children & communities are interconnected. Investing in children, especially when they make mistakes is an investment in our future.

## Interested in learning more or getting involved?

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In the U.S., African-American youth make up only 17% of overall youth population, but are 30% of youth arrested, and a staggering 62% of youth prosecuted as adults.

*-Campaign For Youth Justice*

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### Help Us Ensure New York State Raises the Age for ALL Youth

Changes to the law must include all of the following:

- Raise the age of criminal responsibility for **all** youth, not just for 16- and 17-year-olds charged with non-violent offenses.
- Raise the age for youth who are *most likely* to end up with criminal records—those charged with crimes defined as violent felonies. About 1 in 4 youth charged with violent felonies end up with a criminal record - twice as often as youth charged with non-violent felonies.
- Raise the age for youth currently charged as juvenile offenders (those youth ages 13-15 who are prosecuted as adults for certain crimes). 13-year-olds are not adults!
- Demand that youth not be held in adult jails and prisons. Youth are subject to excessively increased rates of abuse in adult prisons and subject to the same conditions as adults, including solitary confinement.

## OUR YOUTH CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER!

Youth transferred from juvenile to adult court systems are 34% more likely to be re-arrested.

*-Campaign For Youth Justice*

Criminal records act as life-altering barriers to employment, higher education admissions, and housing. They also carry serious immigration consequences.

Youth in adult facilities are 36 times more likely to commit suicide and are sexually abused at rates that far exceed the adult population. *-Campaign For Youth Justice*