

RAISE the AGE | NY

Raise the Age Coalition Statement on Final FY 2023 New York State Budget

Today, New York State legislators reached a budgetary agreement preserving the Raise the Age law, despite Governor Hochul's last-minute effort to roll back this historic set of reforms. The Raise the Age NY Coalition is grateful for our champions in the New York State Senate and Assembly who have stood up for New York's young people and fought for a more equitable criminal justice system during these negotiations.

As New York's elected leaders look ahead, they must focus on real solutions that address the root causes of violence and are grounded in public health. **It is imperative our elected leaders continue to protect Raise the Age and resist fear-based efforts to roll back the law during the upcoming legislative session.**

Now, the Governor must ensure that New York fully funds Raise the Age implementation, making certain resources reach counties quickly to support community-based organizations that directly serve our youth and communities. The State previously allocated \$800 million for RTA over the last 4 years, but only \$270 million has actually been invested in communities. This funding is crucial to support organizations that provide youth development, mentorship and violence-prevention services proven to reduce crime. We demand the State follow through on its commitments.

The pandemic has compromised the safety and stability of families, highlighting and exacerbating existing inequalities and disproportionately impacting youth of color. New York's children, youth and families have experienced enormous adversity and disruption. As we recover from the collective trauma of the COVID-19 crisis across New York and work to uproot systemic racism from our criminal legal system, this is the moment for a bold new vision for youth justice for more resilient and safer communities.

That is why we were deeply disappointed to see that State leaders moved to undo key bail reform measures and expand Kendra's Law. These decisions continue to criminalize poverty, especially in Black and brown communities, perpetuating the inequities our leaders have pledged to confront and address. It is even more unconscionable to go backwards in the face of evidence that makes it clear bail reform is not responsible for the current uptick in crime.

Young people across New York are looking to our elected leaders to stand up, defend, and take charge in leading us out of COVID-19 with lasting solutions and real investments in youth and healthy communities. The Raise the Age NY Coalition will continue to fight until all of our children have the resources they need to thrive and feel safe in their communities.