



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senators Carlucci & Klein Host Raise the Age Round Table with Chief Judge Lippman & Advocates

JEFFREY D. KLEIN February 21, 2017

| ISSUE: **RAISE THE AGE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**

Discussion focused on crafting legislation and included an address by Chief Judge Lippman

OSSINING, NY – As part of efforts to craft legislation raising the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18, **Senators David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester)** and **Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)** held a roundtable discussion keynoted by the Honorable Jonathan Lippman, former Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals who has been an outspoken advocate on the issue. In addition to Judge Lippman, local elected officials, policy experts and community leaders who made various arguments in support of raising the age, joined Carlucci and Klein at the roundtable.

“New York is one of only two states in that nation that has failed to recognize what science and research have confirmed; 16- and 17-year-olds are still developing and cannot be prosecuted the same way as adults. By raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18 we can reduce the rate of recidivism in young adults to give more of them the chance they deserve to succeed in the future. Bringing together advocates and experts will give us a plan to fight for the change that will benefit the entire state because it saves lives and saves money,” **said Senator David Carlucci.**

“As we continue our work on raising the age of criminal responsibility in New York it is important to have discussions with all stakeholders involved. That’s why earlier this month the Independent Democratic Conference held the first hearing dedicated solely to the topic. Today we continued these efforts with Judge Lippman, a long time advocate, and partners who work with juveniles every day to hear their thoughts on the issue. Through our efforts I am confident we will develop thorough, well thought out legislation to finally raise the age in New York," **said Senator Klein.**

“Raising the age of criminal responsibility in New York is the single most important step that we can take to ensure the future well-being of our youth. We cannot continue to destroy the American Dream, for the next generation of New Yorkers, by treating children as adult criminals. I applaud Senator Klein and Senator Carlucci for their exceptional leadership in juvenile justice reform and on behalf of the Raise The Age Movement,” **added Chief Judge Lippman.**

The round table came at a time when the Independent Democratic Conference has been at the forefront of developing legislation addressing the age of criminal responsibility in New York. In December, the conference released a report on the economic impact of Raise the Age and in early February held the first hearing dedicated solely to the issue, hearing nearly four hours of testimony.

Currently, New York is one of two states that treats 16- and 17-year-olds as adults within the criminal justice system.

“Developmental science shows clearly that adolescent brains are different than adult brains. Instead of wasting vital resources by locking up children with much older incarcerated people, it is imperative that New York State uses prevailing scientific understanding to rehabilitate those who fall into the criminal justice system at a young age. These children

must be provided with adjudication, rehabilitation, and placement services that are age appropriate. The mission of our corrections system is to rehabilitate and prepare for again becoming a productive member of society. This can not be a one size fits all approach, especially when it comes to our children," **stated Westchester County Legislator Catherine Borgia.**

"Westchester Children's Association (WCA) is encouraged by the momentum for Raise the Age legislation. Treating 16 and 17 year olds as children, rather than adults, in the justice system will positively impact the lives of roughly 1,000 Westchester youth every single year. Only comprehensive reform as laid out by the "Raise the Age NY" campaign will provide our county's youth with the rehabilitative, therapeutic and educational opportunities that will help them turn their lives around. With the right supports youth are less likely to recidivate, therefore making our communities safer and giving our young people the chance for a productive, engaged future," **said Westchester Children's Association Executive Director Cora Greenberg.**

"Having personal experience with the criminal justice system and now working with at-risk youth to develop consequential thinking skills, this population is extremely vulnerable to the negative influences and trauma of incarceration, resulting in re-offending and potentially prolonged mental and social instability," **explained M.A.D.E Transitional Services Executive Director Toney Earl, Jr.**

"Treating children as adults in the criminal justice system is short-sighted and ineffective takes opportunities away from thousands of young men and women every year. Studies have shown that young people transferred to the adult criminal justice system are 34% more likely to be re-arrested for violent and other crimes than youth retained in a youth justice system. New York must catch up to the rest of the nation and pass legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility before another generation of our youth have to suffer the

consequences,” said **Victoria Khazzam, Supervisor of the Restorative Justice and Custody Visitation programs at the Westchester Rockland Mediation Center**

“The Youth Shelter Program of Westchester is proud to have our voices heard. Our program has been doing for forty years what the state of New York is only just contemplating. Our program remains a beacon of hope for all young people who find themselves in a familiar place for similarly situated teenagers, making mistakes that are typical of our peer group. We thank Sen. Carlucci for his courage to bring this issue to the forefront and to listen to those most closely affected. We believe that the solution is always closest to the issue. We remain an important resource for youth now, when RTA passes and an effective model of how to treat young people in the midst of RTA,” said **Christian M. Philemon, Executive Director, Youth Shelter Program of Westchester.**

“I wholeheartedly support this initiative through our state legislator; reason being, too many young people, particularly African-Americans and Latinos are getting an unfair shake through our justice system. My hope and prayer is that those we send to Albany will have a heart to see beyond the numbers and see the humanity and the heart of these young men and women. I am thankful for efforts to raise the age so our young people can have a second chance and not be a part of what has been deemed a prison industrial complex,” said **Reverend Shaun Jones, Pastor, Star Bethlehem Baptist Church.**