



News Release

Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie

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Speaker Heastie Statement on Raise the Age Legislation

It is unfortunate that Republican Senators have chosen to engage in a misinformation campaign about the intent of the Raise the Age proposal that has been a part of this year's budget negotiations.

From the very beginning, I have very clearly stated that our goal was to ensure that young people who are accused of non-violent crimes are not sent to adult criminal court. Unfortunately, some Senators have chosen to engage in a fear campaign that falsely accuses Assembly Democrats of coddling murderers and rapists in the context of this issue. Nothing could be further from the truth. Productive discussions about how to reach our goal are ongoing, so it is disappointing to read these kinds of statements which do not represent the real progress we have made.

We have seen firsthand the devastating consequences of families torn apart and lives cut short by an ineffective policy of throwing children into adult prisons for non-violent crimes. Raising the age is not about a "free pass." Rather, it is about adopting age appropriate alternatives to address these cases. Thoughtful and responsible public policy has been adopted in 48 other states and it is unconscionable that any New Yorker would want to continue this abhorrent practice.

We will continue our efforts to raise the age of adult criminal responsibility because it is long overdue and our communities demand a resolution that seeks meaningful intervention and rehabilitation for juvenile offenders. This conference will not accept the status quo. We demand the same compassion for giving all children and families a chance to turn their lives around and pursue better futures.

During a time when "fake news" and misinformation has become a plague in our country, we owe it to our constituents to be truthful and honest about the important issues we are facing.

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[[Welcome Page](#)] [[Press Releases](#)]