



**Letter of Support**  
**Youth Justice Innovation Fund A767 (Solages) / S643 (Cleare)**

We, the undersigned, write in support of the **Youth Justice Innovation Fund A767 (Solages) / S643 (Cleare)** as a critical piece of the final enacted budget supporting young people and community safety across New York State.

The Youth Justice Innovation Fund would direct \$50 million to **community-based organizations to provide a continuum of services** from prevention, early intervention, to alternatives to detention, placement and incarceration for youth aged 12 through 25. The Innovation Fund builds on successful state-wide efforts like [Project RISE](#), which has brought over \$30 million to communities to combat gun violence through public health strategies, including credible messenger and violence interruption programs.

**The undersigned groups thank the Senate for including funding for this proposal in their One-House budget resolution. We urge the Governor and Legislature to ensure that \$50 million for the Youth Justice Innovation Fund is included in the final adopted budget for 2025-2026. This funding must cover young people ages 12-25 across all counties in New York, including NYC, and must not result in additional contact with probation services.**

The **Innovation Fund would be administered by New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, making \$50 million available to community-based organizations** most trusted and best-equipped to serve adolescents and young adults through a grant-making program to support young people who are at-risk for or who come into contact with law enforcement. Before this, community-based organizations have accessed state funding for youth justice through county plans, meaning that the fabric of community based support is vastly different in different parts of the state, based on local politics and priorities. The Innovation Fund would be available to community-based organizations across New York, including NYC, and groups could apply for state funding directly. The Fund would also break-down current silos in funding that create arbitrary barriers to serving youth in different court systems by supporting programs and services for youth from age 12 through age 25.

Overall, youth crime has consistently gone down since the Raise the Age law was first implemented in 2018. Evidence from across the State clearly shows how the law has improved community safety and youth well-being. Despite this significant progress, New York State has failed to fully deliver on its promise to fund community-based services and programs that provide alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs for young people. From 2019-2023, only a third of the money appropriated for youth justice under Raise the Age has been spent.

**The Innovation Fund would take \$50 million of the annual \$250 million appropriation for Raise the Age and dedicate it to directly funding community based organizations** providing services ranging from mentoring and school support, to employment and internships, to mental health, counseling and other **age-appropriate programs shown to reduce contact with the criminal justice system and**



**future court-involvement.** A [recent report from the statewide Alternatives to Incarceration coalition](#) shows that there is currently a significant gap in these kinds of programs. The fund would help to build up these critical community resources that bolster neighborhood safety and support positive youth development.

Sincerely,

1199 SEIU  
Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of New York  
Alianza for Opportunity  
Alliance for Quality Education  
Aspire Hope  
Astor Services  
Bronx Defenders  
Brooklyn Defender Services  
Broome County Public Defender's Office  
CASA of New York State  
CASA-NYC  
CASES  
Center for Appellate Litigation  
Center for Family Representation  
Central In Action, Central Synagogue  
Children's Defense Fund-New York  
Children's Home Wyoming Conference  
Children's Rights  
Citizens Concerned for Children, Inc.  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
COFCCA  
Council on Alcoholism and Addictions of the Finger Lakes  
Covenant House  
Equality New York  
exalt  
Families On The Move of NYC, Inc.  
Families Together of New York State  
FAMILY OF WOODSTOCK INC  
Family Ties of Westchester, Inc.  
Fearless Queens  
Forestdale, Inc.  
Freedom Agenda  
GANGS Coalition  
Generational Engagement Matters  
Glove House, Inc.



Good Shepherd Services (GSS)  
Grace Institute  
Hope for Youth  
Hope's Door, Inc.  
JCCA  
Justice for Families  
KAVI (Kings Against Violence Initiative)  
Lawyers For Children  
Legal Action Center  
Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County  
MercyFirst  
My Sisters' Place  
New Directions Youth and Family Services  
New York City Employment and Training Coalition  
New York County Defender Services  
New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare  
New York State Defenders Association, Inc.  
Northern Regional Center for Independent Living  
NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health  
Parents Legislative Action Network (PLAN)  
Project Rise 315  
Queens Defenders  
Queens Defenders  
Represent Justice  
Rise up Rochester, Inc.  
Safe Horizon  
SCAN-Harbor  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy  
SFC  
Sister to Sister International, Inc.  
Stella & Charles Guttman Community College  
The Animation Project  
The Brotherhood Sister Sol  
The Center for Fair Futures  
The Children's Agenda  
The Children's Law Center  
The Children's Village  
The Fortune Society  
The Legal Aid Society  
The New York Foundling  
The Prisoners' Brain Trust  
The STEM Alliance



Together We Can  
UAW Region 9A  
United Neighborhood Houses  
United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region  
Urban Youth Alliance (BronxConnect)  
Vera Institute of Justice  
Vibrant Emotional Health  
VOICE Buffalo  
We Are Revolutionary  
WESPAC Foundation, Inc.  
Westchester Children's Association  
Westchester Youth Alliance  
Westhab Inc.  
White Plains Youth Bureau  
Youth Design Center  
Youth INC  
Youth Justice Network  
Youth Law & Psychology Lab, John Jay College of Criminal Justice  
Youth Shelter Program of Westchester  
Zone 126