

**State of Connecticut**  
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

February 8, 2007

Dear members of the Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee:

This session, the Connecticut General Assembly will consider legislation to end a shameful distinction. Our State locks up more children in adult prisons than any other state in the nation. We are one of only three states to punish all 16 and 17-year-olds--even those accused of the most minor and nonviolent of offenses---as adults.

Voluminous research shows that keeping nonviolent children in the juvenile system prevents recidivism. So, we endanger the public safety by encouraging future crime while harming the economy by setting up children to spend a lifetime in the system. It is a cruel and senseless practice that legislators on both sides of the aisle agree we must end.

As co-chairwomen of the legislature's Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee, our charge was to thoroughly study the implications of returning all but the most serious young offenders to the juvenile system. We were glad to have all manner of people at the table with us: police chiefs, children's advocates, lawyers, judges and our colleagues from the departments of Children and Families and of Corrections. Their presence has enabled us to create a plan that makes sense not just from the perspective of lobbyists or politicians, but also for the people on the ground who will have to make our recommendations work day in and day out.

This report marks the culmination of the Committee's process. It contains detailed recommendations and an implementation plan for raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction in Connecticut from 16 to 18.


The five central components of the plan are to:

1. Raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16 to 18 in this legislative session, with an effective date of July 1, 2009;
2. Improve court diversion and pre-trial detention practices;
3. Establish Regional Youth Courts;
4. Phase in an effective system of services and supports for 16- and 17-year-olds; and
5. Establish a Policy and Operations Coordinating Council.

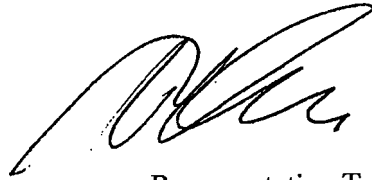
Our hope is that this process will have the greatest impact on a particular group: the young people who now lose their childhood in adult prisons. But we also expect the policy changes recommended in this report to make every citizen of this state safer and save tax dollars over time.

We feel privileged to have taken part in this process—the true product of statewide collaboration. We thank everyone who participated as it has required hours of dedication and hard work, and demonstrates Connecticut's commitment to a brighter future for our children.

Sincerely,



Senator Toni Harp  
Co-Chair, Juvenile Jurisdiction  
and Implementation Committee



Representative Toni Walker  
Co-Chair, Juvenile Jurisdiction  
and Implementation Committee