



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER LYDDY
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH DISTRICT

3 SMOKE RISE RIDGE
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT 06470
HOME: (203) 426-6927
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8500
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
E-mail: Christopher.Lyddy@cga.ct.gov

MEMBER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Representative Lawlor, Senator McDonald, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in opposition to House Bill 6386. My name is Christopher Lyddy. In addition to serving as the State Representative for the 106th district, I am a social worker and the Program Director for the Hartford Juvenile Risk Reduction Center. The Center provides group, individual and family services for juveniles (ages 11-15) and youth (ages 16-17) who are on probation.

Let me first start by saying that in the midst of all the stress and disappointments with the current fiscal situation, we have a number of things to be proud of here in Connecticut. Of those points of pride should be the recent passage and the successful phasing-in of the Raise the Age initiative. Not only are we saving lives and keeping kids from recidivating, we are saving money and are serving the state's taxpayers responsibly and with their quality of life in mind. To simply delay this progress is fiscally shortsighted and does not take into account the spirit and intent with which this legislation was originally passed.

Let me drill it down for you. Raising the age is a coordinated effort that is and will continue to impact many stakeholders and will address many social factors within our communities. This is a system change that allows us to shift the manner in which we prosecute and treat our youth.

Raising the age enables us the ability to deliver age and gender-specific services that target the various criminogenic needs of each and every child and youth that filter through the courts. We have developed an infrastructure that is cost-effective for the state and allows us to curb recidivism amongst our children and youth.

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." We have the great responsibility and an even greater opportunity to change the way we do business, to change the way we view, treat and develop our youth. Delaying the raise the age legislation simply impedes our ability to give kids the tools they need to stay out of the criminal justice system and be contributive members of our society.

Finally, it is my understanding that there have been a number of statutory changes to the original legislation that seeks to lift the financial burden of municipalities. I applaud those who have taken the time and energy to ensure that the voices of towns and cities were heard. In a time where we often seem stuck because of our financial conditions, I believe we can move forward to implement this legislation while looking long-term at the savings for the state.

For these reasons, I am opposed to delaying the implementation of the legislation that raises the age of juvenile jurisdiction.