



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery and the Senate Democratic Conference join Akeem Browder to push for Raise the Age and criminal justice reform

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY March 28, 2017

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

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Senator Montgomery and the Senate Democratic Conference welcome Akeem Browder to Albany to continue the push for transformational juvenile and criminal justice reform in New York State as part of the ongoing budget negotiations.

Akeem's brother, Kalief, was arrested at the age of 16 for allegedly stealing a backpack and spent almost four years at Rikers Island, two of those in solitary confinement before finally being released. Kalief's experiences with the criminal justice system contributed to his suicide two years later. Kalief and other young people are the impetus behind the Senate Democratic Conference movement to reform the juvenile justice system and Raise the Age in our state.

The Senate Democratic Conference has led the fight to 'raise the age' of adult criminal responsibility so that 16- and 17-year old kids are no longer automatically forced into the adult criminal justice system. **New York and North Carolina are the last two states in the nation to continue to prosecute and treat children like adults in the corrections system.** We need to end this practice, and not allow half measures or watered-down compromises to keep our children behind bars.

The legislation supported by the Senate Democratic Conference (S.4157/A.4876) has already passed the State Assembly and has the support of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus. This bill, sponsored for over five years by Democratic Senator Velmanette Montgomery, is the only true ‘raise the age’ option, as alternative plans would continue to lock up 16- and 17-year old kids and deny them services designed to help children reform and lead productive lives.

Additionally, the Senate Democratic Conference budget priorities encompass criminal justice reform measures including:

- **A real “Raise the Age” reform** – For years, the Senate Democratic Conference has led the fight to ‘Raise the Age’ of adult criminal responsibility so that 16- and 17-year old kids are no longer automatically forced into the adult criminal justice system. Our proposal is the only true ‘Raise the Age’ option, as alternative plans would continue to lock up 16- and 17-year old kids and deny them services designed to help children reform and lead productive lives.
- **Speedy trial reform** – The Senate Democratic Conference has long-supported a series of criminal justice reforms, including the right to a speedy trial process as well as bail reform.

Unfortunately, the Senate Democratic budget proposals were blocked by the Senate Republican and Independent Democratic Conference (IDC) Coalition. Despite this setback, the fight isn’t over. The stakes are too high for partisan politics to come before serving the public, and that is a message Senator Montgomery and her Conference colleagues will keep delivering to the Senate Republicans and IDC throughout budget negotiations.

To learn more about Senator Montgomery's Raise the Age legislation, visit:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/articles/velmanette-montgomery/senator-velmanette-montgomery-introduces-raise-age>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/in-the-news/velmanette-montgomery/raise-age-movement-behind-slogan-op-ed>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/articles/velmanette-montgomery/analysis-differences-between-governors-proposal-and-lentol>

To learn more about “Kalief’s Law”, visit

http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=&leg_video=&bn=A03055&term=2017&Summary=Y

To learn more about Akeem's advocacy work, visit

<http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Criminal-justice-advocates-press-their-case-11032048.php>

<http://blog.timesunion.com/capitol/archives/273448/kalief-browders-brother-pushes-speedy-trial-reform-in-albany/>

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S4157

-
- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to raising the age for prosecution of certain crimes

February 03, 2017

In Senate Committee [Judiciary](#)

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Do you support this bill?