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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

MAJORITY SECRETARY
CHAIR

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

COMMITTEES:

AGRICULTURE

CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME & CORRECTION

EDUCATION

FINANCE

HEALTH

February 15, 2019

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
Room 907, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Liz Krueger
Senate Finance Chairwoman
Room 416, New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Chairwoman Krueger:

We respectfully request a \$5.4 million appropriation in the 2019-20 budget to support the 21 YouthBuild programs located throughout New York State.

YouthBuild is one of the most effective and successful diversion programs in New York State. This nationally and internationally recognized program builds a pathway of success for young people aged 16-24 who have been involved with the criminal justice system, out-of-school students and out-of-work youth.

YouthBuild programs provide high school equivalency educational services, stipends, college readiness, vocational and skills training (in fields such as construction, IT, building maintenance, green energy training, nursing, etc.), union apprenticeships, professional certifications (construction certification, OSHA certification), career services and job placement assistance, permanent economic self-sufficiency as well as ongoing placement services and support for thousands of YouthBuild alumni. YouthBuild students also deliver hundreds of hours of community service while producing and preserving affordable housing in their communities. Since 1994, YouthBuild students have created over 5,000 units of affordable housing in our state.

As we move forward with the implementation of **Raise the Age** reform, YouthBuild is a valuable tool in reducing recidivism rates (8% in NYS) to keep young people out of the criminal justice system. YouthBuild dedicates itself to our communities by moving young people toward self-sufficiency, and ensuring that participants develop skills for work and beyond.

Recently, the majority of YouthBuild programs were not awarded funding through the U.S. Department of Labor. A large number of programs have begun the process of staff layoffs, implementing program cuts and are in imminent danger of closing their doors. New York State funding is desperately needed to allow for the continuation of these important programs.

New York's investment in YouthBuild will offer young adults an opportunity to better their futures by preparing them for higher education or a career, teaching them how to become better citizens, and inspiring their peers, families and others in their communities as positive role models.

The YouthBuild movement began in New York State, and expanded nationally and internationally. In many communities across NYS, YouthBuild is the only viable option for out of school youth. It is time for New York State to resume the mantle of leadership to fund a program with a proven record of accomplishment of transforming the lives of young people.

Sincerely,



Senator Velmanette Montgomery
25th Senate District



Senator Leroy Comrie
14th Senate District



Senator Brad Hoylman
27th Senate District



Senator Tim Kennedy
63rd Senate District



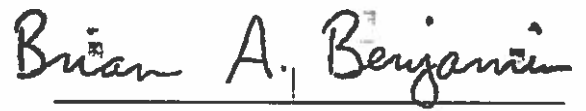
Senator Monica Martinez
3rd Senate District



Senator Rachel May
53rd Senate District



Senator Diane Savino
23rd Senate District



Senator Brian Benjamin
30th Senate District