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February 11, 2016

Honorable John Flanagan
Temporary President, New York State Senate
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Democratic Conference Leader
907 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Jeffrey D. Klein
Independent Democratic Conference Leader
913 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Legislative Leaders:

We thank you for standing with us last year to pass a budget appropriating \$4.484 million for runaway and homeless youth. However, the need far exceeds the current capacity of programs serving this population. We write to request that the New York State Senate:

- Increase ongoing **programmatic funding for runaway & homeless youth (RHY) to \$10 million**, requiring an additional \$5.516 million be added to last year's total appropriation. This funding would support the creation of 124 new beds and supportive services: 44 in New York City and 80 throughout the rest of the state. Additionally, \$100,000 of this ask would fund the planning and design of a comprehensive statewide count of homeless youth to be implemented next fiscal year and to occur again every subsequent three years.
- Provide funding for upfront capital investments to accommodate the expansion of 124 new beds for runaway and homeless youth mentioned above. Utilizing asking prices for real properties on the market and recent property acquisition costs from providers, **we request \$13 million in capital funding**, \$7 million of which would be used to acquire and renovate property for 44 New York City beds and \$6 million to acquire and renovate property for an additional 80 beds throughout the rest of the state.

Statewide, the network of providers serving homeless youth do much more than just give these young people a bed and hot meal. The additional funding we request will ensure that the comprehensive services provided to New York's runaway and homeless youth are effectively funded and efficiently coordinated.

The needs of the homeless youth population are diverse. Due to the lack of available beds and supports, the risk of sexual exploitation is real, as many young people are forced to turn to survival sex and often fall under the influence of traffickers and pimps. Approximately 40 percent of the homeless young people across New York State identify as LGBT, with outright rejection from their homes being the cause of their homelessness. Finally, many homeless youth have had a history of engagement with the criminal justice system, having turned to street crime as a survival tactic. RHY programs equip young people with the education, job training, and life skills to prevent recidivism.

A number of critical investments on behalf of runaway and homeless youth can save New York State significant money and effort if these young people can be stabilized before becoming chronically homeless adults. We appreciate your past commitment to runaway and homeless youth and look forward to more comprehensively addressing this issue in the FY 2016-17 Enacted Budget.

Sincerely,



Brad Hoylman
State Senator
27th District

Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
State Senator
15th District

Neil D. Breslin
State Senator
44th District

David Carlucci
State Senator
38th District

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Martin Malavé Dilan
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Marc Panepinto
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State Senator
33rd District

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10th District

Diane J. Savino
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23rd District

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