



Reform Raise the Age Funding

Align Funding Structure with Growing Fiscal Pressures

The Challenge

Raise the Age shifted significant youth justice responsibilities to counties, but the funding structure does not reflect the mandatory nature of these obligations. Counties must advance costs for staffing, supervision, and placement and then wait months for reimbursement through a complex approval process. Tying reimbursement eligibility to compliance with the 2% Property Tax Cap further exposes counties to unnecessary financial risk. Counties are placed in the position of managing a state mandate without reliable funding.

The Impact

This structure creates:

- Budget uncertainty and cash-flow strain
- Difficulty maintaining adequate staffing and services
- Increased exposure to reimbursement losses
- Reduced flexibility to respond to changing youth justice needs

The Solution

The state should:

- Convert Raise the Age funding to a grant-based model
- Provide predictable, upfront funding
- Remove linkage between reimbursement and the Property Tax Cap

This would align funding responsibility with state policy decisions.

The Benefits

- Improves budget stability
- Reduces administrative burden
- Protects local taxpayers
- Strengthens implementation of justice reforms

