

Time Warner Cable - Governor Again Spearheading Push to 'Raise The Age'

By Nick Reisman:

Jan 30, 2016

ALBANY, N.Y. -- Gov. Andrew Cuomo is once again this year making a push for reforming how juvenile offenders are treated in the criminal justice system. He wants to raise the age of adult prosecution to 18.

"It is unconscionable that New York is one of two states in the country where the 16- and 17-year-olds are tried as adults, so hearing it again from the governor as a priority is a good first step," said Assemblyman Michael Blake, D-Bronx.

Cuomo last year backed a plan that would move juvenile inmates out of the adult prison population to alternative facilities. At the same time, he wanted to increase the age of adult trials from 16 to 18, but lawmakers couldn't agree on a solution to the issue.

"When we look at the criminal justice system, and you look at the proposals that came out of the original commission that he put together, they're very extensive and they require a lot," said state Sen. Pat Gallivan, R-Elma. "I think it requires much more than just checking a box.

After the raise the age legislation stalled, Cuomo last year took executive action to move juvenile inmates into a specialized facility, but the issue of automatically trying 16- and 17-year-olds as adults remains.

"My concerns remain the same. Whatever changes we're going to affect, we have to make sure they're good for everybody, not just the individual who commits a crime," said Gallivan, who says he remains open to finding alternatives to incarceration.

"We all should be concerned about reversing recidivism for all ages, whether people are 16 if they commit a crime, whether they are 20, 40 or 50. So certainly we ought to take a look at programming that's available to reduce recidivism."

In the Democratic-led Assembly, lawmakers there hope for a breakthrough on an issue that's especially important to urban and minority members.

"The reality is, everyone made mistakes as a teenager and that shouldn't impact your future forever, so what we need to do is figure out ways that we can build this bridge together to get this done," Blake.