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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 1, 2018
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES SEA CHANGE IN JUVENILE JUSTICE AS
THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY IS RAISED TO 18 YEARS OLD**

16- and 17-year-olds have moved off Rikers Island into more age-appropriate facilities with expanded access to programs and services

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today welcomed the beginning of a series of fundamental reforms that treat 16- and 17-year-old juveniles involved with the legal system in an age appropriate manner. “Raise the Age,” which passed last year, builds upon the tremendous work that has already been done to transform the juvenile justice system in New York City, including the implementation of the Close to Home Program and cutting the juvenile population by more than half over the last four years. As of today, all 16- and 17-year-olds have moved from Rikers Island to dedicated juvenile facilities with the services they need to help them get their lives back on track.

“Beginning today, no one under 18 will go to Rikers Island. Kids will be treated like kids instead of adults,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “This is an historic moment for criminal justice reform and another step toward replacing Rikers Island with smaller, safer, more humane facilities that are closer to communities and loved ones.”

New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said, “As Speaker of Assembly I have made Raise the Age and comprehensive criminal justice reforms in New York a top priority. Evidence shows that 16- and 17-year-olds should not be treated the same as adults – in the courts or in our prisons. Passing this legislation and removing youth from Rikers are significant steps that give young people a second chance to grow up and pursue meaningful rehabilitation for non-violent mistakes without forfeiting their futures. While there are still some wrinkles that need to be ironed out and addressed, these critical changes to our criminal justice system would not be possible without the tireless advocacy of my colleagues in the Assembly Majority and support of our partners in government. I thank Mayor de Blasio for his efforts in helping to make a difference in the lives of so many young people.”

Over the last year, New York City has completely overhauled an entire facility to prepare for entry of these young people into the juvenile justice system. Raise the Age takes effect today for 16-year-olds and for 17-year-olds on October 1, 2019, but as of today, no 16- or 17-year-old will

be detained on Rikers Island and they will all receive the same treatment as other juveniles in New York City custody, including programs and services. Once fully implemented, most cases involving 16- and 17-year-olds will be moved to Family Court, with others going to a new specialized Youth Part to address 16- and 17-year-olds charged with more serious crimes.

The City worked closely with State agencies to meet these shared goals, including close collaboration with New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, Commission of Correction and the Office of Children and Family Services.

As of yesterday, New York City has successfully transferred all 16- and 17-year-olds off of Rikers Island and into overhauled facilities, which provide services and programming aimed at reducing re-offending and helping them get their lives back on track. Teens moving off of Rikers Island have been transferred to the newly renovated Horizon Juvenile Detention Center, where they will have better access to age-appropriate services, including education and counseling. To reduce the number of 16- and 17-year-olds in detention, the de Blasio administration has also invested \$8 million in diversion programming like supervised release, case expediting, and intensive mentorship.

The de Blasio administration completed the overhaul of the Horizon facility on a greatly accelerated timeline and with significant investment. The facility has been renovated top-to-bottom, including reconstruction of housing units, intake, administrative facilities, staff service areas and upgraded recreational areas as well as new building systems. The facility is staffed by ACS program counselors, Correction Officers, and DOE staff. Over the next 18 months, DOC will gradually phase out correction officers and ACS will take over administration of the facility completely.

The renovations join significant investments into the entire system. There is \$329 million in capital funding dedicated to upgrading juvenile facilities for Raise the Age, with over \$100 million in work well underway at Crossroads and Horizon, ACS's two secure detention facilities. Implementation of other facets of Raise the Age includes an initial investment of \$108 million in Fiscal Year 2019, growing to \$131 million in FY20. The renovation and upgrade of the Crossroads and Horizons facilities were managed by the New York City Department of Design and Construction for ACS.

The passage of Raise the Age legislation is a significant moment for the state of New York. Moving these youth off of Rikers Island — into facilities that are closer to their families and community supports — is aligned with the City's broader mission of replacing Rikers Island with a smaller, safer, community-based jail system. Until now, New York and North Carolina were the only two states in the country not to recognize and codify what research has confirmed—adolescents are children, and prosecuting and punishing them in adult facilities neither advances the goal of rehabilitating youth nor protects public safety.

“This is a historic day, as we witness the implementation of one of the most groundbreaking juvenile justice reforms in New York's history: Raise the Age,” said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “Under Raise the Age, New York State's justice system will finally acknowledge what volumes of research in adolescent brain science has shown us: treating young

people as young people produces better outcomes for youth who are involved in the justice system. We have developed a unified set of standards and practices to ensure the law and spirit of Raise the Age is implemented with youth development as the focus, all while preserving the safety and security of youth and staff and protecting public safety. Under Raise the Age, youth—including those who were at Rikers—will be provided with education, counseling, family support and more. This is an opportunity to build on the successful work that has already been done to transform the juvenile justice system in New York City through the Close to Home program, a national and international model.”

“I want to personally thank the officers and staff members who worked hard to ensure this transition is a smooth one,” said **Department of Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann**. “Our officers underwent special, youth-based training to prepare them for this historic move. The safety of both the 16 and 17-year-olds and our personnel remain our highest priority and we look forward to partnering with ACS on this critical move. We are committed to helping make sure these young people live in a safe and constructive environment.”

Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, said, “Today is a landmark day when New York State joins the rest of the nation in adhering to a basic standard of decency that ensures that children are treated as children in our justice system. It came about because of decades of work by armies of dedicated public servants, service providers, advocates, scholars and others. They deserve tremendous credit for making our system fairer and we are grateful for their ongoing partnership as New York City continues its push to make every aspect of our justice system as fair and effective as possible.”

Chief Judge Janet DiFiore said, “The New York State Courts have worked tirelessly to prepare for this groundbreaking law. We’ve created and staffed new Youth Parts, expanded capacity for Family Court proceedings, especially in New York City, for the older adolescents that court will now address, and expanded access to court for youth arrested after hours to ensure they go before specially trained criminal court “accessible magistrate” judges to be promptly heard on detention status. In addition, we’ve created a new case management system to carefully track and provide statewide data regarding all raise the age impacted youth. Our Judges and non-judicial staff are well-trained and prepared.”

Since the law passed last year, New York City has been working to create this new system for older youth and to establish the infrastructure to support it. The Department of Probation has increased its staff to accommodate the influx of new cases and will continue to leverage its expertise to offer diversion options for appropriate cases coming into Family Court as well as effective alternative to placement programs to keep young people safely in their communities and new pre-trial options in the Youth Parts.

Currently, ACS operates two secure detention facilities—Horizon in the South Bronx and Crossroads in Brooklyn. Under the initial phase of Raise the Age implementation, Crossroads will house youth under the age of 17 who are charged with certain levels of crimes, and will be staffed primarily by ACS, with DOC serving in an advisory capacity on security issues. Horizon will house the adult-charged 16- and 17-year-olds who are currently on Rikers, as well as

newly arrested 17-year-olds who will continue to be charged as adults until October 1, 2019. Horizon will be jointly operated by both ACS and DOC during this transition phase.

Youth in Crossroads and Horizon receive education, health care, mental health services (including psychiatric and psychological care), dental care, access to recreational activities, and case management onsite. Youth also attend the NYC Department of Education's (DOE) District 79 Passages Academy, a full-time educational program that is operated by DOE across the City's entire juvenile justice residential landscape.

Raise the Age will impact youth across the entire juvenile justice continuum in New York City. For instance, Crossroads and Horizon Juvenile Detention Centers house arrested youth who are awaiting their court resolution. New York City also operates the Close to Home Program for youth who have been convicted of a crime. Close to Home is inextricably linked to Raise the Age because many of the 16- and 17- year old youth who otherwise would have gone through the adult criminal justice system will now be placed in Close to Home residences within the City and close to their families and communities.

The legislation also establishes a Youth Part in the New York State Unified Court System, which includes a presumption of releasing Adolescent Offenders on their own recognizance.

The City has launched a number of programs to ensure that young people in the criminal justice system are treated in a developmentally appropriate way, maximizing their opportunity to build a productive future. According to the Columbia University Justice Lab, since the launch of New York's Close to Home program, there's been a significant improvement in public safety outcomes. Specifically, there has been a 53 percent decline in youth arrests and a 37 percent decline in youth detention.

"The Raise the Age legislation will allow us to create a developmentally-appropriate justice system, which our young people deserve and require," said **Commissioner Ana M. Bermúdez, Department of Probation**. "The Department of Probation has learned what works in engaging with young people and will be providing them with the kinds of evidence-based programs, resources and people, such as credible messenger mentors, that can make the biggest difference in their lives. Our probation officers who work with young people have been trained in how to engage with them in an age-appropriate, one-size-fits-one way. We are ready and honored to be part of this historic shift in how we, as a system, effectively respond to young people who have made mistakes, so that they can avoid a future of justice involvement."

"The DDC team did a remarkable job converting the two facilities to meet the very constricted October 1st deadline," said **DDC Commissioner Lorraine Grillo**. "The design was coordinated with ACS and DOC to maximize programming space while ensuring the safety of staff and residents. DDC is very proud to provide these facilities to help improve outcomes for young people."

"We have a long way to go to make our justice system more human and more effective, but ending the terrible practice of detaining minors as adults is a big step forward," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "I thank our legislative leaders who insisted that we enact this long-

overdue reform, the Governor for signing it into law, and Mayor de Blasio for ensuring that it has been implemented in advance of the statutory deadline."

Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Chair of the Judiciary Committee, said: "Today marks an important first step in ensuring that our justice system is meeting the needs of our society, with juveniles no longer being detained on Rikers Island. I refuse to accept that any child's life should be thrown out, doomed to spend a life in and out of prison, and applaud the joint efforts of New York City and New York State to provide support for these kids so they can become productive members of our community. I look forward to the full implementation of Raise the Age in 2019, where children can be tried in age-appropriate Family Court or the newly-created Youth Part of the New York State Unified Court System for more serious crimes."

Assembly Member Latrice Walker said, "The passage of Raise the Age will fix injustices that have gone on for far too long. Providing a safer environment and proficient staff for teenagers will reform juvenile justice completely. I commend all the Elected officials and City Agencies that have worked together to bring 16 and 17-year-olds closer to home and provide services for them that will give them a second chance they deserve."

"It is promising that the City is moving to implement Raise the Age and safely relocate 16-and 17-year-olds off of Rikers Island. This is a signal that we can safely and responsibly close Rikers Island within the needed timeframe. I am hopeful for a successful rollout that ensures the safety and well-being of all," said **Council Member Keith Powers, Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee**.

"The burden of youth imprisonment falls far too heavily on communities of color and this decision opens the door to the possibility of a productive future for thousands of 16 and 17 year olds. If we are to grow and improve as a society, we need to work with our youth so they become the contributors we want them to be, not the criminals we fear they will become. Our responsibility now is to go even further; investing in education, investing in support; to provide resources that allow them to become successful adults," said **Karol Mason, President of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice**.

"The time to remove 16 and 17 year olds from the adult criminal justice system is long past due. These adolescents require a different, more treatment focused pretrial experience than the adult system and jails provide. The City has an opportunity now to make a difference and do it right," said **Martin F. Horn, Distinguished Lecturer in Corrections at the John Jay College and former Commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction**.

Today, as Raise the Age legislation goes into effect across New York State, the Raise the Age coalition recognizes the years of ground-breaking work of hundreds of diverse individuals and organizations, including formerly incarcerated youth and their families, child advocates, service providers, faith leaders, legal services groups, and state and local officials, who worked to make this day a reality. We celebrate our shared victory to raise the age of juvenile accountability in New York State, to require parents be notified of their adolescent's arrest, to process youth in courts intended to meet their developmental needs, to house youth in settings that keep them safe, and to permit more young people to move forward without the burden of adult criminal

records. We are proud that our work together has transformed the juvenile justice system for thousands of youth and families throughout New York State,” said **Julia Davis, Childrens Defense Fund, on behalf of the Raise the Age Campaign.**

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