

Office of
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**Dykema Supports Bipartisan Legislation
to Move 17-Year-Olds into Juvenile Justice System**

Representative Carolyn Dykema (D-Holliston) joined her colleagues in the Massachusetts House of Representatives last week to unanimously support bipartisan legislation increasing the age of juvenile jurisdiction from the 17th birthday to the 18th birthday. Massachusetts is one of only 11 states in which 17-year-olds are automatically prosecuted as adults.

“As a cosponsor of this legislation, I believe that it is crucial for juveniles that enter the justice system to be given proper guidance, structure and tools to get back on the path to being productive members of our community,” said Rep. Dykema. “Brain development research in recent years has shown that adolescents between the ages of 11 and 18 are at a critical point in their growth and development, and this change will ensure that we are providing a real chance for these youths to be rehabilitated.”

Through education and substance abuse prevention programs at juvenile detention centers that are not available in the adult prison system, the bill creates an important opportunity to stop a cycle of crime. If the bill passes into law, it will also require that parents of 17-year old offenders be notified by police when their children are arrested. Under current law, parents are not notified since 17-year olds are considered adults.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

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