Sample Campaign Outreach/Endorsement Letter

Youth Justice YourState

1 Riverside Rd.

Easton, YS 01234

October 2017

Dear Governor Jon Block, Attorney General Louisa Ramirez, Senator Joe Larden, and Senator Ann Hatchet:

Our state's citizens spend millions in tax dollars on a juvenile justice system that fails our children. YourState overuses incarceration, keeping hundreds of youth in prisons where they are far from their families and vulnerable to physical and sexual assault. Despite research showing that incarceration does not increase community safety, YourState's juvenile justice system continues to send youth to the outdated West Oak and Rand prisons. Young people of color are disproportionately likely to experience incarceration in YourState, with African-American youth 4 times as likely and Latino youth twice as likely to be locked up as their white peers.

The undersigned organizations are writing in support of Youth Justice YourState, a campaign made up of community organizations, advocates, youth, and families. We ask you to improve YourState’s juvenile justice system, and to make better use of our tax dollars, by investing in communities instead of prisons. We ask that you act swiftly to close Rand and West Oak, and to reinvest the cost savings in a continuum of community-based alternatives. While we believe that most youth can be served in their own communities and in non-secure settings, we also recognize that there will be a small number of youth who require a higher level of supervision and services. For those youth, we ask that you look to national research and best practices, offering intensive services and supervision in smaller facilities, close to youth’s homes.

We can and must do better for our state’s youth, families, and communities. As social justice organizations who have seen first-hand the terrible impact of youth prisons on young people, we urge you to take action today to close YourState’s youth prisons and encourage reinvestment in proven therapeutic and community-based interventions as alternatives.

Sincerely,