



August 18, 2025

Darryl C. Towns, Chairman
NYS Board of Parole
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12226

Dear Chairman Towns,

We write to strongly oppose the recently announced proposed rule altering the Parole Board's (the Board) considerations when determining the release of a minor offender to parole. New York is already facing a public safety crisis fueled by pro-criminal reforms championed by the State Legislature and signed into law by the Governor in recent years. These include problematic reforms to our parole system, such as the *Less is More* legislation that made it more difficult to reincarcerate individuals that violated parole. This proposed rule would inflict further harm on our criminal justice system and impair the ability to hold dangerous offenders accountable and keep the public safe.

It is particularly alarming that the Board would propose such changes at a time when youth crime continues to rise in the era of *Raise the Age*. While *Raise the Age* legislation was well-intentioned, focusing on the youthful characteristics of the offender rather than the nature of the crime committed has created a system where minors know that they are unlikely to face real consequences for their conduct. Recent crime statistics demonstrate the negative impact that excessive leniency for criminal minors has on public safety. In New York City, the number of minors accused of serious crimes has risen by 25 percent since 2018.¹ This includes a 136 percent increase in the number of minors arrested with a firearm.²

¹ "Number of Young People Accused of Serious Crimes Surges in New York City," Maria Cramer, New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/20/nyregion/youth-crime-arrests-nyc.html>.

² "Youth Violence has Skyrocketed in NYC, top cop Jessica Tisch Reveals as she Blames Contentions 'Raise the Age' Law, Haley Brown and Amanda Woods, New York Post, <https://nypost.com/2025/06/03/us-news/youth-violence-has-skyrocketed-in-nyc-top-cop-jessica-tisch-reveals-as-she-blames-contentious-raise-the-age-law/>.

Under the proposed rule, the Parole Board would be required to “place great weight on the minor offender characteristics when making parole release decisions.” Rather than focusing on the dangerousness the offender poses to the community, the nature of the underlying crime, or the impact of their criminal conduct on the victims of their crime, the Board would be required to heavily weigh the “diminished culpability of youths as compared to adults.” This would include considering the ongoing development in a youth’s psychological and brain function, a youth’s limited control over their own environment, and a youth’s diminished susceptibility to deterrence. Other relevant factors that the Board would be required to place significant weight on are hallmarks of youth, such as immaturity, “an underdeveloped sense of responsibility,” and “limited ability to assess or appreciate the risks and consequences of behavior.” This approach creates a substantial risk that violent offenders will be prematurely released, further eroding public trust in the criminal justice system.

Moreover, the proposed language of this rule defines a ‘minor offender’ as “an individual serving a maximum sentence of life for a crime committed prior to attaining 18 years of age.” As we read it, the Parole Board would be required to greatly weigh the “minor offender characteristics” only for those offenders who are serving a life sentence for a crime committed while the offender was under the age of eighteen. As you know, life sentences are reserved for those who have committed Class A felonies, such as murder and predatory sexual assault. Criminals who would qualify for consideration under this rule would only be the most dangerous and violent minor offenders in our prison system. Creating a system for parole determinations which creates leniency for those minor offenders who have committed the most serious offenses under our laws is illogical and will have a potentially devastating impact on public safety in our communities.

This change to parole comes at a time when the Parole Board is already releasing cop-killers and discharging dangerous criminals from supervision — as in the case of Rickey Crouch, who, after being freed from parole, went on to murder his girlfriend.³ We believe this proposed rule will only accelerate the Parole Board’s slide into lawlessness.

Now is not the time to adopt a policy which seeks to negate criminal culpability for violent offenders who have already demonstrated a willingness to endanger their communities and inflict serious harm on others. The Parole Board must instead prioritize public safety and ensure that dangerous violent criminals, regardless of age, are not released back into the community.

³ “New York Senator Questions Parole Discharge after Buffalo Murder,” Claudine Ewing, WGRZ Buffalo, [New York senator questions parole discharge after Buffalo murder](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Rolison". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Senator Rob Rolison

Ranker of the Standing Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction
39th District

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Dean Murray

Member, Standing Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction
3rd District