

Lansing First Church of the Brethren
3020 S. Washington Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910

November 2018

WE SUPPORT "RAISE THE AGE" LEGISLATION: HB 4607, 4653, 4659, 4662, 4664, 4676, 4685, 6396

TO: Members of the Michigan House of Representatives
We, the undersigned, are:

- residents of the State of Michigan
- people of faith who believe in the dignity and sanctity of each human being
- voters
- members of the Lansing First Church of the Brethren
- citizens who find it essential to increase the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 17 to 18 years old

Because:

Youth placed in adult jails and prisons are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence, isolation and self-harm. Compared to prison, Michigan's public and private juvenile facilities – many of which already serve youth with adult convictions – can provide age/developmentally appropriate treatment that is more effective in rehabilitating youth.

Juvenile courts offer highly effective diversion and community-based programs not accessible in adult court. Because the majority of 17-year-old offenders have non-violent charges*, they would likely respond well to community-based options that are designed to keep kids in school, address underlying treatment needs, and engage the whole family.

Michigan is one of only four remaining states in the United States where 17-year-olds are automatically considered adults for criminal offenses. To align with standard national practices, Michigan should raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18 years.

It is the responsibility of Michigan adults to protect Michigan's children from abuse. Let us do the right thing and raise the age!

* Source: Reducing Youth Arrests Keeps Kids Healthy and Successful: A Health Analysis of Youth Arrest in Michigan. Human Impact Partners Oakland, CA. Funded by W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Pastor Julie J. Kilmer 48910
HJ 48906
Caleb M. Moustau 48911
Andrew Lapp 48906
Severly J. Deaf 48842

Daniel C. Gray 48842
Judith Suppe 48808
Joanne A. Enrick 48854
Paul Brum DelRe 48917
Carol Brum DelRe 48917
Judith Swess 48823