

**ADOPTED – DECEMBER 12, 2017
AGENDA ITEM NO. 39**

Introduced by the Law & Courts Committee of the:

INGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO “RAISE THE AGE” FOR
JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN MICHIGAN**

RESOLUTION # 17 – 507

WHEREAS, Michigan remains one of five states in the U.S. that automatically prosecutes 17-year-olds as adults, regardless of the severity of the crime, which is unaligned with national best practices, recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, and Michigan’s other governing laws that define “youth” as any individual under the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, the majority of 17-year-olds entering the criminal justice system are arrested for nonviolent, misdemeanor offenses, many of whom would be eligible for diversion in the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS, research on adolescent brain development shows that teens are more inclined to take risks, act impulsively, and succumb to peer pressure, which may lead to delinquent behavior, yet are very responsive to rehabilitative programs and behavior modification during these formative years; and

WHEREAS, recent research from the Justice Policy Institute shows that projected costs associated with raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to 18 were consistently overstated and that states that have raised the age to 18 have instead contained costs by reallocating funds to keeping young people in the community, thus reducing confinement and improving community safety; and

WHEREAS, research shows that youths tried before an adult court were 44% more likely to be re-arrested for felony property crimes and 85% more likely to be re-arrested for violent crimes compared to those tried before a juvenile court; and

WHEREAS, when adolescents are tried as adults, their conviction data is public and thus accessible to employers and other professionals resulting in lifelong consequences, including significant barriers to accessing housing, employment, and higher education, and these obstacles lead to a lifetime of poor physical and mental health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the juvenile justice system prioritizes developmentally appropriate community-based programs and diversion services designed to rehabilitate and encourage family involvement in treatment, but these programs and services are not made available to 17-year-olds in the adult system; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Disease Control, prosecuting youths as adults increases recidivism, and states that have transferred their 17-year-olds to the juvenile justice system have experienced improvements in public safety (Justice Policy Institute, 2017); and

WHEREAS, the “Youth In Prison” legislative package, including House Bills 4607, 4653, 4662, 4664, 4676, 4659, 4685, and 4789, was presented to the Michigan Legislature in the 2017-18 session to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 17 to 18 years of age.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ingham County Board of Commissioners hereby urges the Michigan Legislature to pass the “Youth in Prison” package, including House Bills 4607, 4653, 4662, 4664, 4676, 4659, and 4685, to align Michigan’s procedures with standard national practices and raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 17 to 18.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners further urges the Legislature to monitor and adopt an appropriate funding mechanism through the Department of Health and Human Services to cover the additional costs associated with increasing the age of the juvenile court jurisdiction from 17 to 18.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners directs the County Controller to send copies of this resolution to the Governor of the State of Michigan, Ingham County’s state Legislative delegation, and the Michigan Association of Counties.

LAW & COURTS: Yeas: Hope, Banas, Celentino, Koenig, Crenshaw, Schafer, Maiville
Nays: None **Absent:** None **Approved 11/30/2017**