

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR  
**JEREMY A. COONEY**  
56<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

**Albany Office:**  
Room 802, Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12247  
(518) 455-2909 • Fax (518) 426-6938

**District Office:**  
280 East Broad St., Suite 110  
Rochester, NY 14604  
(585) 225-3650 • Fax (585) 225-3661

**E-mail Address:** [cooney@nysenate.gov](mailto:cooney@nysenate.gov)  
**Webpage:** [cooney.nysenate.gov](http://cooney.nysenate.gov)

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Ann Graham, Executive Director  
Reentry Association of WNY  
71 Olde Tavern Circle  
Rochester, New York 14612

January 25, 2022

Dear Ms. Graham:

I write to enthusiastically endorse and support the **Reentry Association of WNY (RAWNY)**'s proposal to create a *Reentry One-Stop Pilot Program* to provide a single point of entry for the formerly incarcerated who are returning to our community.

The needs and interests of those individuals and families re-entering our community after a period of incarceration has been a long-standing concern of mine. The Monroe County area was once able to boast about having a coordinated and resourceful response to the challenges that people in reentry face. Committed agencies and faith-based groups were able to offer everything from correctional in-reach at the jails and through the prison system, to advocacy, support and treatment, to job development and transitional housing. Over the years, resources have dwindled such that we are currently only able to provide these transitional services at a fraction of previous costs.

As you know, the reentry challenges facing the formerly incarcerated are formidable. The vast majority of people who are incarcerated are released back to their community and are in need of services to ensure that they are able to successfully reintegrate and avoid recidivism. Unfortunately, despite available services, the formerly incarcerated are not provided the guidance they need to connect with services designed to address their unique issues. A single point of entry for the formerly incarcerated where they can be assessed for needs and connected to appropriate service providers would remedy this problem. Additionally, the reentry service community needs an organization that can advocate for additional funding to improve services, and develop minimum standards for the provision of reentry services. RAWNY is uniquely positioned to provide those services, given expertise and years of experience.

RAWNY has operated for the past 18 months as a primarily volunteer effort, stretching a small amount of funding as far as possible. After recently meeting with RAWNY's Executive Director and Board members, it is clear that operations are in danger of ceasing in early February if transitional funding is not received to sustain until full funding is obtainable, which I am confident will happen later in the year. I support RAWNY's efforts, and was grateful to help secure \$10k for the organization in the state budget this past year. I am pleased to provide any assistance you need in developing and implementing the Reentry Continuum of Care Pilot Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy A. Cooney".

Jeremy A. Cooney  
New York State Senator