

Proclamation

"Youth Justice Awareness Month"

WHEREAS, the historical role of the juvenile court system is to rehabilitate and treat youthful offenders while holding them accountable and maintaining public safety and is therefore better equipped to work with youth than the punitive nature of the adult criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, youth are developmentally different from adults and these differences have been documented by research on the adolescent brain and acknowledged by the US and State supreme courts, many state and federal laws that prohibit youth under age 18 from taking on major adult responsibilities such as voting, jury duty, and military service; and

WHEREAS, youth who are placed under the commitment of the juvenile court system are able to access age appropriate services, education, and remain closer to their families, all of which reduces the likelihood of future offending; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 200,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults every year in the United States and most of the youth are prosecuted for non-violent offenses; and

WHEREAS, most laws allowing the prosecuting of youth as adults were enacted prior to research evidence by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention demonstrating that youth prosecuted in adult court actually decreases public safety as, on average, they are 34 percent more likely to commit future crimes than youth retained in the juvenile system; and

WHEREAS, youth of color and youth with disabilities and mental health issues are disproportionately represented at all stages of the criminal justice system; and

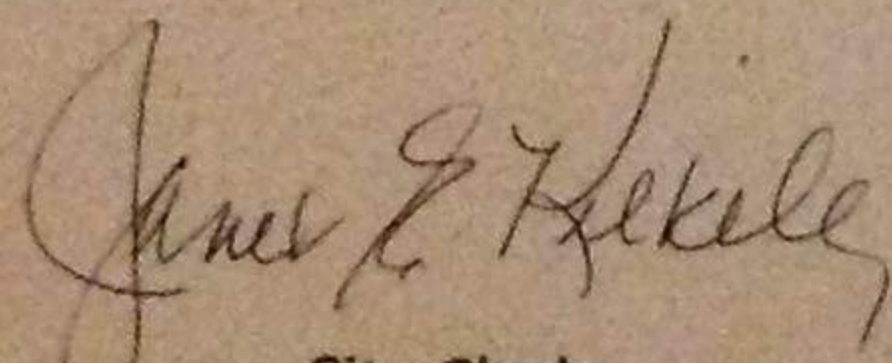
WHEREAS, it is harmful to public safety and to young offenders to confine youth in adult jails or prisons where they are significantly more likely to be physically and sexually assaulted and where they are often placed in solitary confinement; and

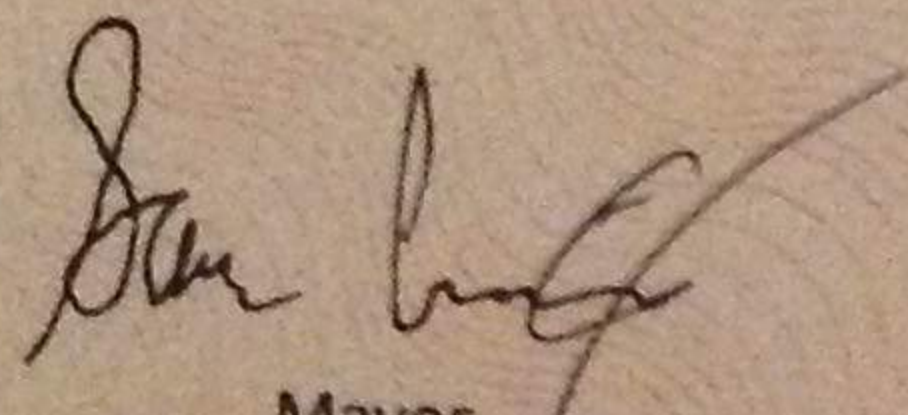
WHEREAS, youth sentenced as adults receive an adult criminal record which deters future education or employment opportunities and the collateral consequences normally applied in the adult justice system should not automatically apply to youth arrested for crimes before the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, youth who receive extremely long sentences deserve an opportunity to demonstrate their potential to grow and change; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Mayor Cunningham, and Members of the City Council of Waukegan, Illinois, do hereby proclaim October as Youth Justice Awareness Month.

ADOPTED this 18th day of September, 2017


City Clerk


Mayor

