Dear Representative or Senator\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

On Wednesday, March 1, co-chairs Senator Camera Bartolotta, Senator Anthony Williams, Rep. Natalie Mihalek, and Rep. Mike Zabel announced a bicameral, bipartisan Youth Safety Caucus (YSC). The caucus was created in order to keep families intact, hold young people accountable, and utilize evidence-based policies that reduce recidivism. The YSC will work to implement policies that expand diversion programs. Community-based responses have been proven to strengthen educational outcomes, keeping young people out of the juvenile system and ultimately the adult system. The caucus will also draft legislation for the elimination of fines and fees and limiting out-of-home placement. The majority of taxpayer money for juvenile justice is spent on out-of-home placement, which costs $190,000 for one youth per year. With the YSC limiting out-of-community placement, those dollars can be used more effectively, such as on funding for diversion programs.

Caring about the people of Pennsylvania is caring about their children. It can be traumatic for families to be separated. Allowing children to stay in their homes and receive rehabilitation from their communities, will keep children safe, keep families connected, and reduce the likelihood of reoffense.

I urge you to join the Youth Safety Caucus!

Sincerely,