‘We Took One Step’ On Raise The Age

From the Morning Memo:

A key reform for the state’s juvenile justice system won’t go before the state Legislature. An effort to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York faltered, and now Gov. Andrew Cuomo plans to go it alone with an executive order.

“Yes, we took one step, but we’re not going to quit until we reach the ultimate goal, and that’s to raise the age,” said Assemblyman Michael Blake, a Bronx Democrat.

Cuomo’s executive order will move 16 and 17-year-old inmates out of adult prisons and into alternative facilities after a larger agreement could not be reached on moving their cases to family court.

“New York should not have the distinction where we are only one of two states still having our young people in these criminal facilities,” Blake said. “We have to actually give them the chance.”

The agreement in part couldn’t be reached on Republican and Democratic lawmakers parting ways on how to shift cases involving teenagers to a different court system.

“Fundamentally you had some Senate Republicans who made it a conscience decision that sending these kids to family court was not the option, not the route,” Blake said.

For his part, Cuomo says the issue fell victim both to complications and the lack of time left in the legislative session, which has been extended more than a week due to disagreements on an array of issues.

“It’s more a question of complication and time and details,” he said. “The raise the age — we made a lot of good progress. We didn’t get there.”

But some Republican lawmakers don’t want to give up on the raise the age issue. Senator Patrick Gallivan says the criminal justice and prison system should be studied for changes for how it impacts young people.

“It’s appropriate we continue the conversation,” said Sen. Pat Gallivan. “I don’t know that anybody can make the argument that we provide sufficient programming and rehabilitation services for 16 and 17-year-olds and ultimately all of the people who are going to return to society.”