

New York State Citizen Review Panels

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Senator John L. Sampson
409 Legislative Office Building
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Sampson:

The New York State Eastern and Western Citizen Review Panels ask you to reconsider your decision to reject the Governor's proposed mandate relief legislation to limit court-ordered child protective investigations included in the Article VII legislation. This bill would allow the courts to order child protective investigations only in those circumstances in which there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Further, these investigations will be subject to the same timeframes as established for all other child protective reports.

The bill provides needed relief to local departments of social services by reducing the number of reports child protective workers must investigate that are not related to a child safety concern. Court-ordered investigations take critical time away from serious cases of child abuse and maltreatment and subject families to an intrusive investigation when there is no need for one. This legislation would free up a portion of child protective workers' time to make the critical decisions they have to make when a child's safety is in question.

As citizens charged with reviewing the policies, procedures and practices in child protective services, we have long been concerned that New York's system is overly broad. We believe that child welfare reforms can lead to cost savings and improve families' lives in New York State. Removing unnecessary court-ordered investigations from child protective services can reduce workloads and lead to better decision-making on cases with serious concerns for children's safety.

We urge you to reconsider your decision to reject this proposal for mandate relief to limit court-ordered child protective investigations and support the Governor's proposal.

Sincerely,



Mary McCarthy
Chair, Eastern Panel



Ellen Kennedy
Chair, Western Panel