

New York State Citizen Review Panels

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March 21, 2011

Senator Dean G. Skelos
Senate Majority Leader
Co-Chair, General Conference Committee
909 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Skelos:

On behalf of the New York State Citizen Review Panels for Child Protective Services, we are writing to ask your consideration for important programs with insufficient funding in budgets under review at this time.

Expand Funding for COPS and Home Visiting:

We appreciate the restoration of funding by both the Assembly and Senate for the various programs included within the Primary Prevention Incentive Fund. Two programs are priorities for the New York State Citizen Review Panels and we ask that you fully restore funds for both. COPS is the only funding source available to local districts of social services that can be used flexibly to provide a system of care to meet the complex and multi-system needs of the children and families at risk for placement. COPS funding is effectively used to provide wrap-around services and co-location of services that better meet the needs of families and prevent costly placement.

Healthy Families NY is an evidence-based program, which supports pregnant women and new mothers to have a healthy pregnancy and build a strong bond with their children. This important primary prevention program has been shown to have long term positive impacts on early childhood development and reducing child maltreatment.

We ask that you consider expanding the amount of funds available for both Healthy Families NY and COPS in the finalized budget.

Provide funding for Kinship Guardianship Assistance:

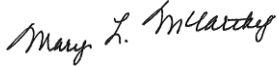
Kinship Guardianship provides permanency for youth in foster care for whom returning home or adoption is not an option. New York passed legislation last year implementing a Kinship Guardianship Assistance program in New York State. We are disappointed that neither the Governor's, Assembly's or Senate's budget offers funding for this important program. The Senate budget takes an additional step and amends Article VII language to give permission to local districts to implement a program rather than mandating them to do so. This program is extremely important for children and youth who are likely to remain in foster care for years

without this assistance. The Foster Care Block Grant, already over extended, will be the funding source for Kinship Guardianship Assistance if action is not taken to establish a dedicated fund.

We encourage you to reconsider Kinship Guardianship Assistance and provide funding in the 2011-12 Budget for its implementation.

We thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely,



Mary McCarthy
Co-Chair
Eastern Panel



David Lansner
Co-Chair
New York City Panel



Ellen Kennedy
Chair
Western Panel

cc: Senators DeFrancisco, Libous, Johnson, Sampson