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STATEMENT BY JENNIFER JONES AUSTIN ON THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A TRUE COST OF LIVING MEASURE FOR NEW YORK STATE

For Immediate Release

September 28, 2026

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Statement by Jennifer Jones Austin on the Introduction of Legislation to Establish a True Cost of Living Measure for New York State

New York, NY (September 28, 2026) – Jennifer Jones Austin, CEO of FPWA and co-chair of the National True Cost of Living Coalition, issued the following statement on the introduction of S10702 by State Senator Roxanne Persaud. The legislation would establish a statewide True Cost of Economic Security measure reflecting what families of different sizes and across New York actually need to meet their expenses and achieve economic security. FPWA has long advocated for more accurate measures of economic security, and Jones Austin chaired the New York City Racial Justice Commission that advanced the True Cost of Living measure approved by city voters in 2022.

“I commend Senator Persaud for taking this critical step toward establishing a true measure of economic security for New York State. It would be a game changer, giving policymakers a far more honest picture of who is struggling and whether the policies we enact are actually helping families get ahead.

For decades, government has made decisions about how much it takes to meet families' needs using measures that bear little resemblance to what families actually need to live securely. We should not be surprised that we have struggled to solve a cost-of-living crisis when for decades we have not accurately measured it. You cannot effectively address a problem you are systematically undercounting.

New York City voters recognized that when they overwhelmingly approved the True Cost of Living measure. Senator Persaud's legislation now gives New York State the opportunity to build on that progress and help set a better standard for the nation."

Senator Persaud issued the following statement:

"Individuals and families across New York State are struggling to put food on their tables and to keep their bills paid. Yet current poverty measures are outdated and fail to provide a comprehensive assessment of the resources households need to meet their basic needs and maintain economic stability. I am proud to introduce and sponsor the True Cost of Economic Security study in the Senate, and I look forward to advancing this measure to provide the Legislature with a more accurate understanding of what it takes for New Yorkers to achieve economic security. New Yorkers must thrive, not just survive."

About FPWA

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) is a leading anti-poverty, social policy and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening human services organizations and faith institutions, and advancing economic opportunity and justice for New Yorkers with low incomes. Since 1922, FPWA has driven groundbreaking policy reforms to better serve those in need and dismantle barriers to economic security and well-being.

About the National True Cost of Living Coalition

The National True Cost of Living Coalition was founded in 2024 by two leading anti-poverty and advocacy organizations: the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) and the Community Service Society of New York (CSS).

Concerned about the nation's inability to both accurately measure what it costs individuals and families to live in America in the 21st century and govern accordingly because existing measures center on acute basic needs and not economic security, they brought together a broad-based group of policy experts and labor, business, philanthropic and community leaders to advocate for the adoption of a national true cost of living measure that would inform policy and programming at all levels of government, and help ensure that economic security is an attainable goal for all Americans.

The Coalition commissioned the Urban Institute to develop a national true cost of living measure using its best-in-class research and methodological analysis. Its efforts have been supported by

the Ford Foundation, The New York Women's Foundation, Stardust Fund, Trinity Church Wall Street, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and others.

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