

New York Public Welfare Association

NYPWA Written Testimony for the Senate Standing Committee on Children & Families

Paul Brady, Executive Director

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The New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) represents all fifty-eight local departments of social services statewide and provides information, policy analysis, and assistance to state and local policymakers and technical support to local districts. The NYPWA is dedicated to effective social services administration to enhance the quality of life in our communities while ensuring accountability for the use of public funds.

Thank you Chair Brisport and the entire Committee on Children and Families for the opportunity to address the child care crisis in New York State. The NYPWA supports the Legislature and the Governor's efforts to make child care a priority. Access to quality, affordable child care is essential for every family—especially those living on low incomes and tight budgets. In fact, accessible child care is needed more than ever to help overcome issues directly related to dire shortages in the labor market.

In recent years, lawmakers have focused on expanding subsidized child care eligibility for more people—buoyed, in part, by the influx of temporary, federal pandemic dollars. It was time to act and New York State did. But increasing eligibility is just one side of the child care coin. The other half is making sure there is an adequate supply of qualified, well-paid child care providers and workers. Without this, we will not be able to meet the current and future demand for child care created by expanded eligibility.

Given this, we respectfully recommend the following:

- Address the loss of child care providers and counteract the growth of “child care deserts”

- Double state child care funding to bring staff wages closer to public teacher payrates and attract more skilled people to the field
- Provide the appropriate technology for implementation of changes in child care eligibility and program policy (i.e., building efficiencies to the state claiming system)

Without continued state fiscal support, efforts to expand eligibility will be reversed and families could face the loss of child care. To be effective, any legislation, regulation or budget action that seeks such expansion must include provisions for appropriate level of state funding and hold counties harmless for the added cost. Absent stable, long-term state support, these new requirements would simply redirect limited child care resources within county allocations.

In closing, we recognize that the NYS Senate's Children and Families Committee has demonstrated strong leadership in boldly seeking child care improvements statewide. We offer our support and expertise on behalf of local departments of social services across the State of New York.

For additional information, contact:

Paul Brady, Executive Director
Rick Terwilliger, Director of Policy
New York Public Welfare Association
info@nypwa.org • 518-465-9305