



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES



Senator Roxanne J. Persaud
Chair

CHAIR
SOCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEES
BANKS
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND SMALL BUSINESS
LABOR
TRANSPORTATION

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD
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December 21, 2020

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Social Services (The Committee) for the 2020 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my Committee's jurisdiction including, but not limited to, alleviation of poverty, assistance to survivors of domestic violence, services for disconnected youth, assistance for individuals with disabilities, workforce readiness and a vast network of services for vulnerable New Yorkers.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, the Social Services Committee met 3 times and reported 13 bills. The Committee also held 3 roundtables and 1 public hearing this past year. The Social Services Committee continued to work closely with the Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities and Children & Families Committees, respectively. Given the marked disparities in access to food and healthcare that COVID-19 has driven to acute levels, the Social Services Committee also consulted the Agriculture and Health Committees on various intersecting issues.

I thank my colleagues who served on the Committee for their efforts and support of the work that we accomplished this year, and I thank you for the continued support from the Majority Conference in the Committee's operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roxanne J. Persaud".

Roxanne J. Persaud

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT
NEW YORK STATE SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

Senator Roxanne J. Persaud, Chairperson

Committee Members

Senator Simcha Felder	Senator Sue Serino
Senator Zellnor Myrie	Senator James Tedisco
Senator Gustavo Rivera	
Senator Julia Salazar	

Committee Staff

Dennis Weakley, Committee Director
Tamara Frazier, Senior Counsel
Lahmar Louis, Senior Budget Analyst

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Social Services has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning the alleviation of poverty, assistance to survivors of domestic violence, services for disconnected youth, assistance for individuals with disabilities, workforce readiness and a vast network of human services programs reaching vulnerable New Yorkers.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, 66 bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, 13 were reported from the Committee. 5 bills were passed by the Senate, 4 of which passed in both houses. This work was conducted through a series of 3 committee meetings. A list of all bills that were reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Social Services Committee held 4 hearings and/or roundtable meetings:

- **Impact of the Family First Act on Kinship Foster Care**
Roundtable discussion in conjunction with the Children & Families Committee.
Date: January 6, 2020. Location: 250 Broadway, Manhattan.
- **The Affordable Housing Crisis & the Impact of Homelessness on Long Island**
Roundtable discussion in conjunction with the Housing and Children & Families Committees.
Date: January 16, 2020. Location: SUNY Farmingdale.
- **Examining Issues Related to Homelessness, Housing Insecurity and Affordable Housing, and Identifying Potential Legislative Remedies**
Public hearing in conjunction with the Housing Committee.
Date: February 28, 2020. Location: 250 Broadway, Manhattan.
- **Housing Insecurity and Homelessness in the Hudson Valley**
Roundtable discussion in conjunction with the Housing Committee.
Date: March 13, 2020. Location: Ferndale, NY.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the committee in 2020:

S5552-A NYS Self-Sufficiency Standard Study (Persaud)

S5552-A would direct the Department of Labor to contract with a third party to produce a self-sufficiency standard study containing up-to-date information on poverty in all areas of the state. The resulting data would provide policy makers with detailed information on poverty in their communities as well as help individuals living in poverty to create a basic needs budget based on their location to help foster financial literacy and economic security. A report would be due to the Governor and Legislature every two years. S5552-A was reported to the Senate Finance Committee on January 14, 2020.

S2375 Home Stability Support Program (Krueger)

S2385 would authorize a new Home Stability Support Program whereby eligible public assistance recipients and/or those facing an imminent loss of housing may receive a shelter supplement equal to 85% of the FMR along with funds for heating assistance to prevent eviction from their established home and thus eliminate the need to enter an emergency shelter. This program would be administered by each local social services district using state funds. S2375 was reported to the Senate Finance Committee on February 11, 2020.

S8247-A SNAP Online Grocery Purchasing (Kaminsky)

S8247-A would require NYS OTDA to seek and maintain necessary federal waivers to enter into agreements with grocery retailers to offer online purchasing of groceries using benefits issued through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). New York State has been a participant in a USDA Pilot Program since 2019. Additionally, numerous references to “food stamps” in the Social Services Law are corrected and modernized to accurately reference the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. S8247-A was signed to Chapter 342 of the Laws of 2020 on December 15, 2020.

S8739 Pandemic Unemployment Insurance Benefits Income Disregard (Persaud)

S8739 would enact a statutory disregard of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance income in determining eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. S8739 passed the Senate and advanced to the Assembly Third Reading Rules Calendar no. 279 on July 22, 2020.

TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2020, four of the 66 bills referred to the Standing Committee on Social Services passed both houses of the Legislature. All four bills have been signed by the Governor.

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Action
S6665	Benjamin	Relates to domestic violence-related activity of the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence; adds a member to the Advisory Council.	Chapter 204, Laws of 2020.
S8247-A	Kaminsky	Authorizes the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to purchase online groceries in accordance with federal laws and regulations and relates to the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program outreach program.	Chapter 342, Laws of 2020.
S8643-A	Liu	Requires the commissioner to collect information regarding the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population during a state disaster emergency and publish a report containing such information on the department's website.	Chapter 331, Laws of 2020.
S8743	Liu	Requires the Commissioner of Social Services to submit a report on the services provided to human trafficking survivors for the purpose of assessing the availability, utilization and necessity for such services.	Chapter 257, Laws of 2020

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S2174	Bailey	Ensures adequate access to information by individuals who have limited English proficiency.	Passed Senate, Delivered to Assembly 2/10/2020
S2375	Krueger	Relates to the creation of Home Stability Support Supplement Programs.	Reported to Senate Finance 2/11/2020
S3041	Sanders	Relates to public notice of basic rights by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for applicants and recipients of public assistance.	Passed Senate, Delivered to Assembly 2/10/2020
S4704	Salazar	Requires the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to develop and provide training to intake workers at homeless shelters focused on how to identify and provide appropriate referrals to those suffering from mental health issues.	Reported to Senate Finance 2/11/2020
S5471	Gounardes	Authorizes certain shelters for victims of domestic violence to be reimbursed for any payment differential for housing a single individual in a room intended for double occupancy.	Reported to Senate Finance 2/11/2020
S5552-A	Persaud	Relates to the creation of a self-sufficiency standard study regarding how much income is needed for a family of a given composition in a given geographic location to adequately meet its basic needs without public or private assistance.	Reported to Senate Finance 1/14/2020
S5810	Montgomery	Relates to home visiting services for applicants for, or recipients of, public assistance benefits who are exempt from certain work activities; provides criteria for those eligible for such home visiting services.	Reported to Cal. No. 164 1/14/2020
S6665	Benjamin	Relates to domestic violence-related activity of the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence; adds a member to the Advisory Council.	Chapter 204, Laws of 2020.

S7694	Persaud	Requires social services districts to maintain a waiting list of certain families applying for child care assistance.	Passed Senate, Delivered to Assembly 07/22/2020
S8247-A	Kaminsky	Authorizes the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to purchase online groceries in accordance with federal laws and regulations and relates to the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program outreach program.	Chapter 342, Laws of 2020.
S8643-A	Liu	Requires the commissioner to collect information regarding the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population during a state disaster emergency and publish a report containing such information on the department's website.	Chapter 331, Laws of 2020.
S8739	Persaud	Provides that receipt of the temporary emergency increase in unemployment compensation benefits as provided for by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (15 U.S.C. Sec. 9023) shall not affect benefit eligibility for certain public assistance benefits.	Passed Senate, referred to Assembly Ways & Means.
S8743	Liu	Requires the Commissioner of Social Services to submit a report on the services provided to human trafficking survivors for the purpose of assessing the availability, utilization and necessity for such services.	Chapter 257, Laws of 2020



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