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January 9, 2009

Honorable David Paterson  
Governor of New York  
Executive Chamber  
Albany, NY 12224

Re: 21-day amendments

Dear Governor Paterson:

The New York Children's Action Network (CAN) Mental Health Committee wishes to voice its concern over the proposed cuts to Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) funding in the Executive Budget.

**The Committee urges you to restore COPS as a category of spending within the child welfare "65/35" spending**, thereby assuring stable funding for a wide variety of important services. These services include children's mental health services that prevent both foster care and juvenile justice placements

The elimination of COPS spending would seriously impact some of the most vulnerable children and youth in New York State. The children and families who are currently benefiting from innovative interventions supported with COPS funding will be at tremendous risk of losing the evidence-based supportive services that are keeping children and youth out of foster care and jail while keeping families together. This cut is made worse by the fact that it is retroactive to October 2008 when expenditures have already accrued.

Please address this issue in your budget amendments and restore COPS funding. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paige Pierce  
Chair, New York CAN Mental Health Committee  
Executive Director, Families Together

cc: Commissioner Carrion, Dennis Whalen, Kristin Proud, Michael Seereiter, Laura Anglin