

Memo of Support

S.5743 (Grisanti)/A.3498A (Peoples-Stokes)

An act to amend the social services law, in relation to notice requirements to families and providers when funding cuts are made.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy strongly supports S.5743/A.3498A requiring local social service districts to notify the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) at least 60 days before the effective date of a planned reduction in eligibility or increase in co-payments for child care assistance. It would require OCFS to provide notice of the change on its web site within 5 days and within 20 days notify providers and child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies, local and state, of the change. Providers and CCR&Rs would then notify parents of the change.

This bill would provide for a simple, cost-effective and improved process to ensure that parents and providers are made aware of critical financial decisions made by counties that will impact their household budgets and business income and give time to develop plans to respond to this loss of financial assistance.

Currently, only a 10 day notice must be given for a reduction or discontinuance of social services benefits. The 10 day notice provision generally applies when the recipient has a change in income but does not make sense for dramatic changes in child care eligibility levels or co-payment multipliers that can affect hundreds of families in a social services district. Since counties receive their subsidy funding annually, it is reasonable to expect that they will be able to project the number of families that can be served 60 days in advance and comply with the new notice standard. Ten days is simply not enough time for a low-income family or child care provider to make plans for a significant decrease in financial support. Child care is the most costly expense for many families, more than rent or mortgage payments. Businesses, child care providers, and parents all experience the repercussions of the change in subsidy.

This bill would provide additional time for families to make alternative arrangements for the care of their children.

The Schuyler Center is committed to improving access to high-quality early care and learning throughout New York and is strongly supportive of this legislation.

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