



NEW YORK
CITY BAR

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August 14, 2008

Hon. David Paterson
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
LOB 932
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Dean G. Skelos
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
State Capitol, Room 503
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver and Majority Leader Skelos:

The New York City Bar Association appreciates the difficult financial circumstances facing the State as you work to maintain the State budget at manageable levels, and we support your efforts to ensure government spending is done efficiently and brings a return on investment. While the need to find reductions in this fiscal climate is difficult for all, we ask that you do all you can to ensure that these reductions do not unduly impact the needs of at-risk children, youth and families. In particular, we urge you to:

- Curtail the shifting of services costs to localities for child welfare, including preventive, protective, foster care, independent living and adoption services, all of which are crucial to children and youth in out-of-home care;
- Maintain and fund the State's commitment to public school education and be mindful of the decision in *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York*, to preserve our achievement gains, continue to lower our drop-out rates, and increase graduation rates for our neediest students;
- Allow the State's Family Courts to handle effectively the increased caseload placed upon them through federal and state mandates and increased activity involving child welfare agencies. Our most vulnerable children and families depend upon that overburdened court for life-changing decisions and have to be assured of responsive and effective court proceedings.

We hope that you will use the City Bar as a resource while planning for additional budget reductions and that you will consider the impact of reductions on the quality of services the Human Services sector will be able to provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia M. Hynes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a distinct "M" and "H".

Patricia M. Hynes

Sent by Email and Fax