

# *New York State Citizen Review Panels*

*Administered by Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy  
150 State St., 4th Floor, Albany, NY 12207  
Ph: 518-463-1896 ext. 24 Fax: 518-463-3364 dmastin@scaany.org*

May 3, 2005

The Honorable [First name; Last name]  
U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510 or 20515

Dear Senator or Representative [Last name]:

As chair of the New York State Eastern Citizen Review Panel I am concerned about the effect proposed changes in child welfare, including possible cuts in funding, will have on abused and neglected children in our state and those at-risk of abuse or neglect. I represent a panel covering 44 counties in New York State. The panel evaluates the extent to which agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with the State's Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan and child protection standards set forth in the federal law.

I ask that you oppose any proposals to block grant the Title IV-E foster care program or to reduce federal funding for any child welfare program. Either action will severely hamper our state's efforts to improve outcomes for children and their families outlined in the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs).

Among my concerns is that proposals made by the Bush Administration and others would negatively impact current education, training, and evaluation programs that are proving successful in improving our state's child welfare workforce. One proposal would eliminate the entitlement funding and enhanced federal match for the Title IV-E training program and pit it against funding for needed services for children and families in a fixed-sum block grant. Another would change IV-E eligibility determinations, and a third would simply reduce funding to comply with instructions in the FY06 budget resolution.

Several recent studies highlight the necessity of a qualified workforce in meeting the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) goals of safety, permanence, and well-being. Others detail the difficulty child welfare agencies continue to have in recruiting and retaining qualified workers. Still others confirm the value of Title IV-E funded agency-university training partnerships in improving the recruitment and retention of competent and caring child welfare workers.

Ensuring that vulnerable children receive high quality care must become a higher national priority. To help make that happen, I urge you to support congressional efforts to maintain the current Title IV-E entitlement, the enhanced federal match for training,

and to secure additional funding to help states address the needs of the child welfare workforce and the needs of children in their care.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Sincerely,

A rectangular box with a yellow border containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Alvord". To the right of the signature is a solid blue rectangular redaction box.

Stacy Alvord  
Chair, New York State Eastern Citizen Review Panel

Cc: Eastern Panel members