

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 27, 2005

Governor George Pataki
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Pataki:

I am writing on behalf of the Eastern Citizen Review Panel for children's protective services to support passage of dual track legislation (A313.A and S1574A). This bill would amend social services law in order to establish seven demonstrations in local social service districts to test a dual track child protective approach for New York State.

Such demonstrations for a dual track approach would allow child protection reports received through the State Central Registry to be assigned, at the district level, to either an investigation track, as is currently the case, or to an assessment track when the severity of the allegations suggests that a less intrusive approach would be appropriate. Reports assigned to the assessment track would be offered service, but various other provisions for current child protective investigations would not be required.

Nearly twenty states are addressing reports of abuse and maltreatment with an alternative response. A final evaluation of Minnesota's alternative response system indicates that such a system does not compromise child safety, reduces the number of additional child maltreatment reports for families, is less costly and more effective in the long-term although initially more expensive, and both CPS workers and families like it and felt it was more effective.

Currently, close to eighty percent of reports to New York's child protection service (CPS) cases are either unfounded or indicated and then closed the same day. A new approach could offer families support services without the intrusiveness of an adversarial investigation and could head off future problems. This approach would also bring a stronger focus and increased resources to those more serious cases.

We urge you to sign this bill if it comes before you and allow New York State to test this family-focused, responsive approach to these important services. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Stacy Alvord
Chair, Eastern Panel

Citizen Review Panels are mandated by federal law. In 1999 the New York Legislature passed S371-b of the Social Services Law establishing panels in New York State to evaluate 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, child protection standards set forth in the federal law, and any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children.