July 25, 2007

Mr. David Nocenti  
Counsel to the Governor  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY  12224  

Re: SUPPORT for A6610b / S4009b  Differential Response  

Dear Mr. Nocenti:  

We are writing on behalf of the New York City Citizen Review Panel in support of A6610/S4009 which would amend social services law to permit a differential response for child protection across New York State. While we are disappointed that New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services will be excluded from considering a differential response, we support its implementation elsewhere in the state.

Our support of this legislation stems from our interest in protecting the safety of children while improving outcomes for children and families involved in New York’s child welfare system. A differential response supports families assigned to an assessment track by allowing a less intrusive, yet service oriented approach. This approach offers a sound alternative that maintains an emphasis on child safety while supporting the state’s efforts to engage families.

Differential response is a non-adversarial approach that can improve local districts use of staff resources, enhance prevention efforts, and heighten receptivity to services. We urge the Governor to sign this legislation.

Sincerely,  

David Lansner     Eric Brettschneider  
Co-Chair, New York City Panel   Co-Chair, New York City Panel

cc: David Rose  
Dennis Whalen  
Kristin Proud

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.