



New York State
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
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Neutral

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The New York State Public Employees Federation, representing 59,000 Professional, Scientific, and Technical workers of New York State, opposes this legislation.

This bill creates the Office of Child Advocate within the Executive Department to promote the rights, safety, and well being of children in programs and facilities administered by the Office of Children and Family Services.

Although well intentioned, this bill only adds another layer to the complex patchwork of oversight of OCFS services without providing significant new benefit. The Office of the Ombudsman in OCFS, which was created by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007, is already charged with some of the duties of the proposed office including protecting the legal rights of children in the agency's care and working to remedy systemic issues. In addition, OCFS regulations require the Office of the Ombudsman to report to an Independent Review Board. Further, the Council on Children and Families is charged with examining service systems of covered agencies, which includes OCFS. If these controls are not performing, keep in mind that the superintendent at every facility is also advised by an outside Board of Visitors appointed by the Governor with access to all operations.

Finally, as a union representing professionals that serve youth in OCFS, it is important to note that the rights and wellbeing of employees must also be protected. Employees are often subject to verbal and physical abuse, as well as false allegations by program participants. Oversight must not come at the expense of the safety and reputation of staff.

For these reasons, the Public Employees Federation urges you to oppose this legislation.

For more information, please contact:

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