

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT
A66 (Hevesi) / S550 (Brisport)

This legislation requires a caller making a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment to the central registry to leave their name and contact information and prohibits the office of children and family services from releasing information identifying a person who made such a report.

Families Together in New York State (FTNYS) is a statewide family run organization that represents, supports and advocates for youth and family voice in policy and systems change to ensure an equitable and inclusive journey that fosters belonging, wellness, and empowerment for all. **FTNYS writes to express our support for A66/S550 on behalf of our family and youth network.**

Each year, anonymous reports to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment disrupt thousands of New York families with unnecessary, invasive investigations that are ultimately determined to be baseless. These investigations are extremely stressful to parents and harmful to children. They waste resources that could instead be directed to support children and families.

The harms of false reporting fall disproportionately on low-income, Black and Brown New Yorkers. As the New York State Bar Association concluded in a recent report on racial justice, it is an “urgent imperative to end the unnecessary disruption and destruction of Black families caused by the child welfare system.”

Domestic violence survivors in particular are hurt by the current law, which allows their abusers to continue to repeatedly harass them and their children by taking advantage of the weaknesses of the reporting system.

The Anti-Harassment in Reporting bill offers a simple solution that will substantially cut down on malicious false reporting by requiring callers who make allegations of child abuse and neglect to provide their names. The law provides strict confidentiality to those who make reports and will deter some of those who would otherwise make false reports, while allowing child protective services to better assess allegations.

For all these reasons, FTNYS strongly urges you to pass this important piece of legislation. If you have any additional questions, please reach out to our Public Policy Director, Brad Hansen, at bhansen@ftnys.org or 518-572-7649.

Sincerely,



Paige Pierce, CEO
Families Together in New York State