

**Report of the
Family Court Advisory
and Rules Committee**

to the Chief Administrative Judge of the
Courts of the State of New York

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I. Introduction

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is one of the standing advisory committees established by the Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts pursuant to section 212(1)(q) of the Judiciary Law and section 212(b) of the Family Court Act. The Committee annually recommends to the Chief Administrative Judge proposals in the areas of Family Court procedure and family law that may be incorporated into the Chief Administrative Judge's legislative program. These recommendations are based on the Committee's own studies, examination of decisional law, and suggestions received from bench and bar. In addition to recommending its own annual legislative program, the Committee reviews and comments on other pending legislative measures concerning Family Court and family law.

A. Legislation Enacted in 2009

Five of the legislative proposals submitted by the Committee in 2009 were incorporated into measures enacted into law during the 2009 legislative session. These include:

1. Repeal of Family Court Act §516 [Ch. 32]: This measure, originally proposed by the Committee, repealed Family Court Act §516, which permitted written agreements for child support between a putative father and either a mother or person acting on a child's behalf that would bar any other child support remedies. Effective: May 19, 2009.

2. Increase in Combined Parental Income "Cap" [Ch. 343]: The *Child Support Modernization Act*, sponsored by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, incorporates, *inter alia*, the proposal of the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee to raise the so-called combined parental income "cap" from \$80,000 to \$130,000, effective Jan. 31, 2010. Starting Jan. 31, 2012, the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance must review it every two years and "increase it by the product of the average annual percentage changes in the consumer price index for all urban consumers (the "CPI-U") published by the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics for the two-year period rounded to the nearest \$1000." Effective: Jan. 31, 2010 (other provisions in statute effective Aug. 11, 2009).

3. Evidence in Permanency Hearings [Ch. 334]: The legislation, proposed by the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, clarifies that, as in the former extension of placement and permanency proceedings under Article 10 of the Family Court Act, hearsay evidence is admissible in permanency hearings convened under Article 10-A of the Act. It amends Family Court Act §1046(c) to make it applicable to permanency and other proceedings under Article 10-A of the Act, thus providing that evidence need only be material and relevant, not competent. It adds a corresponding amendment to Family Court Act §1089, incorporating that provision, as well as subdivision (a) of Family Court Act §1046, the general evidence provision, by reference into Article 10-A. Effective: October 10, 2009.

4. Custody and Visitation Proceedings Involving Members of the Military [Ch. 473]: This measure, proposed by the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, amends chapter 576 of the laws of 2008 regarding custody and visitation proceedings in Supreme and Family Courts involving a

party or parties in the military. The legislation amends Domestic Relations Law §240, Family Court Act §651 and the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act [Domestic Relations Law §75-1] to provide that, unless the parties have otherwise stipulated or agreed, an allegation that a parent has returned from active service in the military automatically constitutes a substantial change in circumstances sufficient to give the parent automatic standing to seek to modify an order of custody or visitation, thus allowing the court to address the issue of the child's best interests. In light of the easing of the standing requirement for members of the military returning from active deployment, it eliminates the requirement in the 2008 statute to deem all orders issued that modify custody or visitation because of the parent's active service as temporary. Additionally, e-mail is added to the enumerated forms of electronic communication between a military parent and his or her child. Finally, the amendments to Domestic Relations Law §240 and Family Court Act §651 are incorporated by reference into Military Law §253. Effective: November 16, 2009.

5. Records-checking in Custody and Visitation Cases [Ch. 295]: This measure, proposed by the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, amends Domestic Relations Law §240 and Family Court Act §651 to make three changes to chapter 595 of the laws of 2008, which established record-checking requirements for all custody and visitation proceedings in Supreme and Family Courts. First, the legislation provides that, instead of requiring reviews of records before issuing a new order whenever more than one month has elapsed since issuance of the previous custody or visitation order, such reviews would be required for any successive temporary order where more than 90 days have elapsed since issuance of the last order and again prior to the issuance of a final order. Second, it clarifies that Family Court, not criminal court, warrants need to be checked as part of the review of the Unified Court System's own database. Finally, it provides that where a Supreme or Family Court is unable to obtain data from the required databases in a timely fashion, e.g., because of a computer malfunction, but deems that the child's best interests compel issuance of an immediate emergency custody or visitation order, the Court must obtain the full information within 24 hours or, if the 24-hour period falls on a day that the court is not in session, on the next day that the court is in session. Effective: Aug. 11, 2009.

B. New and Modified Legislative Proposals

As in 2009, highest among the Committee's priorities is the pressing need for more Family Court judges, since the fixed number of 154 judgeships authorized in the Family Court Act has remained virtually unchanged for over a decade, notwithstanding the Court's far higher and more complex workload.¹ The Office of Court Administration will again be submitting its legislative

¹ See *Kids and Families Still Can't Wait: The Urgent Case for New Family Court Judgeships* (NYS Senate Policy Group, Oct. 30, 2009); *A Call to Action: The Crisis in Family Court* (Fund for Modern Courts, Feb., 2009); *The Long Road Home* 177-178 (Children's Rights, Nov., 2009); A.Schepard & T.Liebmann, "Law and Children: Ending a 3.5- Minute Justice in New York's Family Court," *N.Y.L.J.* Nov. 13, 2009, p.3, col. 1; K. Carroll & A. White, "Disorder and Delay: There's Been a Dramatic Increase in Abuse and Neglect Charges Filed Against City Parents, and Family Court is Overwhelmed Again," 15 *Child Welfare Watch* 5-7, 26 (Winter, 2008); *The Permanency Legislation of 2005: An Unfunded mandate –Critical Resource Needs for New York City's Children*

proposal to create 21 new Family Court judgeships, which passed the New York State Senate in 2009. Additionally, the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing a comprehensive legislative agenda, including 13 new and modified proposals and 10 proposals previously recommended. These proposals address all areas of Family Court practice, thereby providing needed clarification and enhancing the Unified Court System's ability to handle these cases effectively. Its agenda of new and modified proposals includes the following:

1. Conditional surrenders: Two decades of experience under the statutes delineating the requirements for enforceability of conditions in surrenders, both judicial and extra-judicial, have revealed all too many cases in which ostensibly plain terms of the statutes have not been followed. Frequently, birth parents have been induced to execute surrenders, particularly extra-judicial surrenders, upon the assumption that informal agreements or side letters of understanding would be enforceable even though they were not presented to the Family or Surrogate's Court for approval and were not incorporated into any written court orders. The Committee's proposal reiterates existing explicit requirements that all conditions accompanying surrenders, both of children in and out of foster care, must be approved by the Family or Surrogate's Court as being in the child's best interests and must be incorporated into a court order in order to be enforceable. To underscore the need for judicial oversight, the measure prohibits extra-judicial surrenders executed on or after the effective date of the statute (January 1, 2011) from containing any conditions. Only judicial surrenders executed on or after that date would be able to contain enforceable conditions and birth parents executing surrenders would have to be so advised. Agreements for post-adoption contact between the surrendered child and birth siblings and half-siblings, where either the child and/or siblings or half-siblings are 14 years of age or older, would likewise require their written consent in order to be enforceable. A copy of the court order incorporating any post-adoption contact agreement or other conditions would need to be given to all parties to the agreement.

2. Adjournments in Contemplation of Dismissal and Suspended Judgments in Child Protective Proceedings: Long-standing uncertainty regarding the consequences of adjournments in contemplation of dismissal and suspended judgments in child protective proceedings has hindered the ability of the Family Courts to utilize these important mechanisms for resolving child protective cases without the need for more drastic alternatives, such as out-of-home foster care placements. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is, therefore, submitting a proposal to clarify and fill gaps in the statutory framework with respect to both of these options. The measure would make clear that an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal may be ordered either before the entry of a fact-finding order or after fact-finding but before the entry of a final disposition. While the former requires the consent of the petitioner-child protective agency and child's attorney, the latter does not, except that the agency and child's attorney would have a right to be heard. Restoration of the proceeding to the Family Court calendar following a finding of a violation of a pre-fact-finding adjournment would restore the matter to the pre-fact-finding stage, while violation of an adjournment ordered after fact-finding but before disposition would restore the case to the dispositional stage. During the period both of an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal and of a suspended judgment, the child would not be

and Families (NYC Bar Assoc. Council on Children, 2007).

permitted to be placed, except on a temporary basis under Family Court Act §1027(a)(iii) pending resolution of a motion or order to show cause alleging a violation of the conditions.

Additionally, the measure would amend Family Court Act §1053 to require that orders suspending judgment delineate the duration, terms and conditions and provide a warning in conspicuous print that failure to comply may lead to its revocation and to issuance of any other dispositional order that might have been made at the time the judgment was suspended. A copy of the order must be furnished to the respondent. Significantly, in contrast to an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, once a parent has successfully completed the period of a suspended judgment, the underlying order of fact-finding would not automatically be vacated; nor would the report on the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment automatically be sealed or expunged. Rather, the parent could apply to the Family Court, pursuant to Family Court Act §1061, for an order vacating the order of fact-finding and dismissing the proceeding in accordance with subdivision (c) of section 1051 of the Family Court Act on the ground that the aid of the Court is no longer required and that the dismissal would be in the children's best interests. A suspended judgment may thus be an appropriate disposition in cases in which the Court determines that a full dismissal of the proceedings, including vacatur of the fact-finding, should not be automatic.

3. Service of orders of protection modification and violation petitions: This measure amends Family Court Act §153-b to provide litigants with the same options of peace and police officer service for modified orders and for petitions alleging violations of orders of protection as they have for original orders and accompanying pleadings. Consistent with legislation enacted in 2007, as well as requirements of the Federal *Violence Against Women Act*, it further clarifies that such service must be available without fee to the litigants. *See* Laws of 2007, ch. 36; 42 U.S.C.A. §3796hh(c)(4). As is the case with applicants for temporary orders of protection at the front end of proceedings in Family Court, litigants seeking enforcement or modification of orders of protection are often in the midst of serious emergencies, may be seeking protection from dangerous situations, and have neither the wherewithal, nor the economic resources, to arrange for service by a non-party over the age of 18, as required by section 2103(a) of the Civil Practice Law and Rules. Lifting the burden from victims of domestic violence of arranging for service of original orders of protection has proven to be essential to the effort to make civil prosecution in Family Court an effective avenue of relief. Provision of the same opportunity for law enforcement service with respect to modified orders and petitions for violations of orders is equally critical to fulfillment of that goal.

4. Services for youth and permanency planning in juvenile delinquency and persons in need of supervision (PINS) proceedings: New York State statutes, as well as both the Federal *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act* [Public Law 107-273, as amended in 2002] and Federal regulations, implementing the Federal *Adoption and Safe Families Act* [Public Law 105-89; Laws of 1999, ch. 7], make clear that the *ASFA* permanency planning mandates apply to all children in foster care, including those in care as a result of juvenile delinquency and PINS petitions. Provision of the services necessary to youth and their families to fulfill these mandates would go a long way toward resolving the serious problems in juvenile facilities noted in the recent report of the Governor's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice and the investigation by the United States Department of Justice. The Committee is proposing a comprehensive measure to implement service and permanency planning mandates for the juvenile justice population and to increase the options available to the Family Courts

to order alternatives to extensions of placement in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings. The proposal includes, *inter alia*:

- authorization for the Family Court not only to consider, but also to craft a case-specific order, that meets the needs and best interests of the juveniles and, in juvenile delinquency cases, that balances these factors with the need for protection of the community, and for the Court to be able to order specific services that would facilitate the juveniles' successful return home;
- authorization for the Family Court to order that, in lieu of extending placement in juvenile delinquency and PINS cases, juveniles may be placed on probation for up to one year or that, in juvenile delinquency cases, juveniles may be conditionally discharged;
- authorization for the Family Court to order intensive supervision, which may include participation in a community-based rehabilitative program, as a disposition for adjudicated juvenile delinquents and PINS who would otherwise be placed and, in juvenile delinquency cases, to include electronic monitoring as a condition of the placement;
- a requirement that non-custodial parents receive notices in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings so that they can participate in dispositional and permanency planning;
- a requirement that "[r]outine, emergency or other mental health treatment, including administration of psychotropic medication, shall be provided by licensed mental health professionals as authorized by law;"
- a provision, similar to Family Court Act §1016, to ensure that the appointment of an attorney for the child in a juvenile delinquency or PINS case would continue during the life of any dispositional or post-dispositional order;
- incorporation of the requirements in Article 10-A of the Family Court Act into juvenile delinquency and PINS dispositions and permanency hearings regarding consideration of the independent living services necessary to assist youth 14 and older and, with respect to a juvenile with "another planned permanent living arrangement" as the permanency goal, identification of a "significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child;"
- a provision in the PINS statute, similar to those applicable to juvenile delinquents and all children subject to permanency hearings under Article 10-A of the Family Court Act, to ensure that the agency with which the child is placed must report to the Court regarding plans for the child's release, in particular with respect to enrollment of the child in a school or vocational program;
- a requirement that the New York State Education Department develop and implement standards to promote school stability for youth in out-of-home care, to require that facility educational programs meet State standards and generate credits for youth that will be recognized by local school districts and to require local school districts to promptly enroll youth in school upon their release; and
- incorporation into juvenile delinquency and PINS dispositions and permanency hearings of the requirements in Article 10-A of the Family Court Act requiring that permanency hearing orders in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings include: a description of the visiting plan between the juvenile and his or her parent or legally-responsible adult; a service plan designed to fulfill the permanency goal for the juvenile; a direction that the parent or other person legally responsible be notified of, and be invited to be present at, any planning conferences convened by the placement agency with respect to the child; and a warning that if the juvenile remains in placement for 15 out of 22 months, the agency may be required to file a petition to terminate parental rights. A copy of the court order and service plan must be provided to the parent or other legally responsible individual.

5. Implementation of the Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions*

Act of 2008 [Public Law 110-351]: The Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351], signed into law in October, 2008, permits Federal Title IV-E foster care resources, for the first time, to be used for subsidized kinship guardianship. The Committee is proposing a measure to establish this as a permanency option in New York, as it had been used successfully in 38 states and the District of Columbia prior to the 2008 statute. Since enactment of the law, three states have had Federally subsidized kinship guardianship programs approved and eleven states have applications pending. Guardianship petitions would be filed with the Family Court presiding over child protective dispositions or permanency hearings and would be consolidated with the hearings in those cases. If enumerated findings are made and the guardianship is granted, all orders under the child protective or permanency proceeding, as applicable, would be terminated; no further permanency hearings would be held and no services or supervision would be provided. The proposal would also add language to the permanency report and court order provisions to implement the educational stability, sibling visitation and transition planning requirements in the Federal *Act*.

6. Penalties for violations and duration of orders of probation in child support proceedings: Alone among probation provisions in both the Family Court Act and Criminal Procedure Law, the child support provisions in the Family Court Act permit a child support obligor to be placed on probation for an extended period of time, *i.e.*, the entire duration of a child support or visitation order or order of protection, and contain no provisions regarding procedures to be followed in the event of a violation of probation. The Committee is re-submitting a proposal to make the duration of probation commensurate with that in persons in need of supervision (PINS) cases – one year, with a one-year extension for “exceptional circumstances” – and to require a verified petition and an opportunity to be heard as prerequisites to revocation of probation in the event of a willful violation. Additionally, upon making a finding of a willful failure to pay child support, the Court would be authorized to combine either a probation sanction or a requirement to participate in a rehabilitative program with a sentence of incarceration, since such a combination may present the most promise in remediating the violation and ensuring consistent, future provision of child support to the family.

7. Restoration of parental rights: Similar to legislation enacted in California in 2005 and Washington in 2007, the Committee is recommending that a provision be added to the statutes regarding termination of parental rights to allow the Family Court, in narrowly defined circumstances, to modify dispositional orders committing guardianship and custody of children and to reinstate parental rights. A petition to restore parental rights would be permitted to be filed upon the consent of the petitioner and respondent, as well as the child, in the original termination of parental rights proceeding. The termination of parental rights must have occurred more than two years prior and the child must be 14 years of age or older, to remain under the jurisdiction of the Family Court and to have a permanency goal other than adoption. The Family Court would be authorized to grant the restoration petition where clear and convincing proof established that it would be in the child’s best interests. The Family Court would also have the option, similar to a provision in the Washington statute, to grant the restoration petition provisionally for a period of up to six months, prior to making the restoration permanent.

8. Orders of protection in termination of parental rights, child protective and permanency proceedings: While permanency for children in foster care is often achieved with the understanding, agreed-upon by everyone involved, that some contact will continue with the child’s birth family, there

have been instances in which continuing contact with a birth parent – for example, threatening or stalking behavior by a disturbed birth parent at the child’s home or school – has endangered the child and destabilized the child’s new family. Since prospective adoptive or foster parents and birth parents do not meet the definition of family contained in Article 8 of the Family Court Act, the current statutory structure provides no vehicle to protect these children and their new families short of a criminal prosecution for a non-family offense. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing a measure to create a Family Court remedy for this problem by authorizing orders of protection to be issued in conjunction with the disposition of termination of parental rights cases and permanency hearings regarding children freed for adoption. These orders of protection, as well as those issued in child protective proceedings, must be entered on the statewide registry of orders of protection and Family Courts must inquire whether other orders have been issued regarding the parties. Additionally, the proposal would permit orders of protection in child protective proceedings to require the respondent parent to stay away, *inter alia*, from a “person with whom the child has been paroled, remanded, placed or released by the court...” Finally, the proposal would permit orders of protection against respondent parents in child protective proceedings to last for up to two years or, upon a finding of aggravating circumstances or violation of an order of protection, up to five years. These orders would then be able to be extended in conjunction with permanency hearings under Article 10-A of the Family Court Act or, for child protective proceedings, other post-dispositional proceedings under Article 10 of the Family Court Act. This parallels the permissible duration of orders of protection in family offense cases and would reduce the burden imposed upon domestic violence victims to request frequent extensions of protective orders. Further, orders of protection in termination of parental rights cases would be permitted for up to five years or the date on which the youngest child turns eighteen, whichever is earlier.

9. Conditions of orders of protection in matrimonial proceedings and violations of orders of protection in Family Court and matrimonial proceedings: In light of ambiguities, gaps and discrepancies in the language of the current statutes, the Committee is submitting a proposal designed to provide guidance for civil enforcement of orders of protection in Family and Supreme Courts, to remedy a disparity in the duration of probation in family offense cases and to incorporate all of the permissible conditions of orders of protection in family offense cases into the provisions regarding orders of protection in matrimonial proceedings. The proposal clarifies that the violation procedures and consequences contained in Article 8 of the Family Court Act apply to all orders of protection and temporary orders of protection issued in family offense, child support, paternity, child custody, visitation, divorce and other matrimonial proceedings. The proposal makes clear that willful violators of temporary and final orders of protection in all categories of cases would be subject to the following sanctions: probation, restitution, visitation prohibition or requirement for supervision, firearms surrender, firearms license suspension or revocation and/or commitment to jail for up to six months. Finally, the proposal would authorize the Family Court to place a respondent in a family offense proceeding on probation for a period of up to two years or, where an order of protection pursuant to Family Court Act §842 has been issued for five years, a period of up to five years, thus equalizing the periods of probation with the duration of orders of protection, as extended by the legislature in 2003. See Laws of 2003, ch. 579.

10. Change of term “law guardian” to “attorney for the child”: Consistent with the recommendations of the Matrimonial Commission in its report to the Chief Judge in 2006 and Rule 7.2 of the Rules of the Chief Judge, which was promulgated shortly thereafter, the Family Court

Advisory and Rules Committee proposes to replace all statutory references to “law guardian” with the more accurate term “attorney for the child.” Continuing the legislative trend toward use of “attorney” in Chapter 626 of the Laws of 2007, Chapter 576 of the Laws of 2008 and Chapters 473 and 476 of the Laws of 2009, the proposal amends the Civil Practice Law and Rules, the Domestic Relations Law, the Executive Law, the Judiciary Law, the Family Court Act, the Public Health Law and the Social Services Law to substitute “attorney” or “counsel” for “law guardian.”

11. Child support obligations of indigent obligors, stipulations of child support and authority to direct establishment of trusts to benefit children: Fifteen years after the Court of Appeals held in Rose v. Moody, 83 N.Y.2d 65 (1993), *cert. denied*, 511 U.S. 1084 (1994), that the inflexible minimum \$25 per month child support obligation was unconstitutional, the statutes have yet to be changed. Further, a literal reading of the statutes creates anomalies in calculating the child support obligation for non-custodial parents whose income would be reduced below the poverty level or below the self-support reserve level by reason of their payment of child support. The Committee thus proposes codification of Rose v. Moody by establishing a presumption that would be rebuttable by consideration of enumerated factors. Further, the proposal would simplify the standards applicable to cases in which a support obligor’s income would fall below either the poverty or self-support reserve levels by virtue of payment of child support. In cases in which the obligor’s income would fall above the poverty level, it would give the court discretion to award or allocate health, education and child care expenses.

The proposal would also address the failure of Family Court Act §413(h) and Domestic Relations Law §240(1-b)(h) to address the consequences of violations of the *Child Support Standards Act* in support agreements and stipulations. The proposal would provide that if an agreement or stipulation fails to comply with any of the *CSSA* requirements, it must be deemed void as of the earlier of the date one of the parties alleged the noncompliance in a pleading or motion or the date the Court made a finding of noncompliance. Further, the proposal requires that upon a finding of noncompliance, the Court must hold a hearing to determine an appropriate amount of child support as of the earlier of the date the noncompliance had been asserted in a pleading or a motion or the date of the Court’s finding of noncompliance. The proposal would preclude noncompliance with the *CSSA* from being raised as a defense to non-payment of child support in violation of an agreement or stipulation for a period prior to the assertion of noncompliance in a motion or pleading. Curing the problem noted by the Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department in Matter of Savini v. Burgaleta, 34 A.D.3d 686 (2d Dept., 2006), the proposal would provide that, unless precluded by the Supreme Court, the Family Court should be considered a court of competent jurisdiction that would have subject matter jurisdiction to review, determine and, where necessary, vacate or modify, not simply enforce, child support in cases in which a divorce judgment did not conform to the *Child Support Standards Act*. Finally, the proposal addresses the not infrequent circumstance in which a non-custodial parent, such as a professional athlete, performer or award winner, receives an economic windfall or exceptionally high income during a short period of time, a windfall unlikely to recur or an income that is not likely to remain at that high level in the future. The proposal would authorize the Court to direct that the non-custodial parent establish a designated account, such as a trust fund or annuity, that would provide the children with a future stream of payments above and beyond the current child support obligation, thus ensuring adequate support even after the non-custodial parent's income has decreased.

12. Referrals for diversion services, warrants and orders of protection in persons in need of

supervision proceedings and family offenses committed by juveniles: The comprehensive reform of the PINS statute enacted in 2005 [Laws of 2005, chapter 57, Part E] has inured to the benefit of many children and families by ensuring the provision of diversion services, in lieu of PINS prosecutions, on a more uniform basis. However, the 2005 statute is unnecessarily restrictive in permitting diversion service referrals and actually curtailed the ability of parents under the preexisting law to secure vital emergency relief in some cases in which harm to the children or their families is imminent. The Committee is, therefore, proposing that diversion service referrals be permitted at any time during the pendency of a PINS proceeding and that two provisions to Article 7 of the Family Court Act be restored that would constitute narrow exceptions to the diversion prerequisites to the filing of PINS petitions. These exceptions would permit filing of PINS petitions without the required diversion documentation where a child has absconded and cannot be located or where a temporary order of protection is needed to avert imminent harm to the petitioner or the petitioner's family. In each of these circumstances, reflecting the prevalent practice in Family Courts statewide prior to the 2005 legislation, once a child has been apprehended on the warrant or is served with the temporary order of protection and appears in Family Court, the Court would then refer the family to the diversion agency, pursuant to Family Court Act §742(b), unless the Court has determined that there is a substantial likelihood that the child would again abscond or pose the threat of harm, as applicable, or that the referral to the diversion agency would be contrary to the child's best interests. With these changes, PINS would thereby become a far more effective vehicle for addressing intra-familial conduct between parent and child than a family offense proceeding under Article 8 of the Family Court Act. Article 8 of the Family Court Act is a wholly inappropriate vehicle for addressing family offenses committed against parents by their children, since youth under the age of 18 are dependent and cannot either be ejected from their homes or incarcerated in adult jails. Unfortunately, an unintended side effect of the PINS diversion statute [Laws of 2005, ch. 57, Part E] has been a sharp escalation in the prosecution of teens by their parents under Article 8 as a means of evading the new PINS diversion requirements. The Committee is thus proposing to require that such cases be dealt with under Article 7, rather than Article 8, of the Family Court Act.

13. Access by probation to the order of protection registry and penalties for unauthorized disclosure: In light of the importance of evidence of domestic violence to determinations in custody, visitation, guardianship and child protective proceedings, the Committee is again proposing legislation that would allow local probation departments to have access to the statewide automated registry of orders of protection and related warrants for pre-dispositional investigations conducted in these categories, as well as in family offense, proceedings. Further, the proposal would explicitly authorize, but not require, courts to request probation departments to conduct pre-dispositional or pre-sentence investigations in criminal and Family Court family offense cases. Further, since the statewide automated registry of orders of protection and warrants has grown into a substantial database containing well over two million orders of protection, the need to ensure its security and integrity grows ever more compelling. The proposal thus also delineates civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized release of data from the statewide automated registry of orders of protection and warrants.

C. Previously Endorsed Measures

The Committee is recommending resubmission of the following 10 proposals:

1. Stays of administrative fair hearings regarding child abuse and neglect reports: The parallel

judicial and administrative systems for determining the validity of reports of child abuse and maltreatment at times operate at cross-purposes, under different time constraints and, in an escalating pattern, have produced inconsistent results. Although Social Services Law §422(8)(b) provides that a Family Court finding of abuse or neglect creates an “irrebuttable presumption,” binding in the administrative fair hearing process, that credible evidence supports an abuse or maltreatment report, sometimes the fair hearing process proceeds to a conclusion prior to the outcome of Family Court child protective proceeding. The Committee is proposing legislation to ensure that in cases in which parallel Family Court and administrative proceedings are in progress, the administrative fair hearing process would not precipitously advance without awaiting the results of the Family Court matter. It would also require local social services districts to notify the New York State Office of Children and Family Services of the outcomes of the Family Court proceedings. The proposal would require that, in a case in which a Family Court child protective proceeding is pending regarding a child named in a child abuse or maltreatment report, the time frames for requesting an administrative amendment of the report or fair hearing, as well as the time frame for the administrative agency to resolve the fair hearing, would not begin to run until the disposition or the conclusion of a period of adjournment in contemplation of dismissal in the Family Court matter.

2. Trial discharges of youth in foster care and voluntary re-placements of youth into foster care: Experience in the Family Court and local and national studies have demonstrated that, all too often, adolescents age out of foster care upon reaching the age of 18 or shortly thereafter wholly unprepared to function in society. Although the Family Court Act permits them to consent to continued foster care with its attendant supports and services up until they reach the age of 21, many make precipitous decisions to show their independence and refuse to consent to remain in care even when they are desperately in need of assistance. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has joined with the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, chaired by former Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, in proposing legislation that would provide necessary supports – a vital “safety net” – for youth aging out of foster care. The proposal would amend the trial discharge provisions of Articles 10 and 10-A of the Family Court Act to explicitly permit the Family Court to extend trial discharges at permanency hearings until youth reach the age of 21; extensions of trial discharges of youth over the age of 18 would require the youth’s consent. Additionally, the proposal would create a new Article 10-B of the Family Court Act that would permit youth between the ages of 18 and 21, who have been discharged from foster care within the past 24 months because of their failure to consent to continued care, to make motions before the Family Court that would enable them to return voluntarily to foster care. In such cases, the Family Court must find that the youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care, that the youth consents to attend an appropriate educational or vocational program and that such return is in the youth’s best interests.

3. Orders for genetic testing in child protective proceedings: Family Court Act §564 permits the Family Court in cases other than paternity cases to enter orders of filiation in limited circumstances: where both parents are before the court, where the father waives the filing of a paternity petition and his right to be heard on that petition and where the court is satisfied as to sworn statements and testimony in support of paternity. In the absence of these requisites, the court’s only alternative is to direct a party to file a paternity petition. The statute provides no authority for the court to direct genetic testing which, with current DNA technology, would provide a swift and accurate answer to questions of parentage. The Committee is proposing a measure that would amend sections 532 and 564 of the Family Court Act to authorize the court to order genetic testing in non-paternity proceedings upon the consent of both parents. Where consent is not obtained, the court would be

permitted to direct any party to file a verified paternity petition. Where the mother's consent is not forthcoming by reason of her absence from the court, the court would be authorized to direct genetic testing so long as she had received notice and an opportunity to be heard.. As in paternity cases, no test would be ordered in cases where the court has made a written finding that testing would not be in the child's best interests by reason of *res judicata*, equitable estoppel or the presumption of legitimacy. Further, Family Court Act §564 would be amended to permit the Family Court to adjudicate paternity on the basis of genetic testing, not simply on the basis of sworn statements or testimony. Corresponding amendments would be made to child protective and permanency provisions of the Family Court Act [Family Court Act §§1035, 1089].

4. Putative fathers entitled to consent to adoptions and to notice of adoption, surrender and termination of parental rights proceedings: In 1980, following the decision of the United States Supreme Court in Caban v. Mohammed, 441 US 388 (1979), the Legislature enacted new criteria defining those putative fathers who are entitled to consent to adoptions and those who are entitled simply to notice of termination of parental rights, surrender and adoption proceedings. Those entitled to notice may be heard regarding the children's best interests, but do not have veto power over their adoptions. Laws of 1980, ch. 575. Notwithstanding the Legislature's goals of providing "reasonable, unambiguous and objective" criteria for notice and consent, the 1980 statute fulfills none of those intentions. See Sponsor's Memorandum, 1980 NYS Leg. Ann. 242-243. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing a measure to expand and objectify the criteria for putative fathers to consent to adoptions of children who were more than six months of age at the time of the filing of the petition to terminate parental rights, application to execute a judicial surrender, petition for approval of an extra-judicial surrender or extra-judicial consent to adoption or petition for adoption, whichever filing is earliest. Those criteria would include, *inter alia*, those named on a child's birth certificate or acknowledgment of paternity, those adjudicated as fathers in New York or another state or territory, those who maintained substantial and continuous or repeated contact with the child through visits at least twice per month or through regular communication, and those who lived with the child for six months during the year prior to the child's placement in foster care or for adoption. Criteria for putative fathers entitled to notice would be expanded to include those who filed and appeared on a custody petition and those identified in an acknowledgment or order of paternity in another country that is entitled to comity in New York State.

5. Child protective proceedings regarding destitute children: Prior to enactment of the permanency legislation [Laws of 2005, ch. 3], proceedings to review the placement of destitute children in foster care were commenced by a petition pursuant to Social Services Law §392. The repeal of that statute left destitute children without any procedural vehicle for placement into foster care where necessary and for periodic review of that placement. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee proposes that Article 10 of the Family Court Act be utilized as the vehicle. Recognizing that, as the definition of "destitute child" in Social Services Law §371 specifies, this condition arises through no fault of the parents, the proposal would specify "destitute" child as a category distinct from "abused" or "neglected" child, but would authorize temporary placements upon the parents' consent, pursuant to Family Court Act §1021, as well as each of the dispositional alternatives available in Family Court Act §1052. Where a destitute child is placed, pursuant to Family Court Act §1055, the placement would be reviewed through permanency hearings under Article 10-A of the Family Court Act. Related amendments would be made to Social Services Law §398. Finally, the proposal would repeal Family Court Act §1059, because it is anachronistic and conflicts with more recent legislation regarding abandoned children.

6. Orders of protection for designated witnesses in juvenile delinquency proceedings: In 1998, sections 530.12 and 530.13 of the Criminal Procedure Law were amended to authorize orders of protection to be issued to protect designated witnesses in criminal proceedings. However, no comparable provision was added to the juvenile delinquency article of the Family Court Act. The Committee is thus proposing to amend Section 352.3 to incorporate the language in Criminal Procedure Law §§530.12 and 530.13 so that witnesses named in the order, not simply complainants, could receive needed protection in juvenile delinquency proceedings.

7. Requirements for Notices of Indicated Child Maltreatment Reports and Changes in Foster Care Placements: Absolutely essential to the effort to expedite permanency for children in furtherance of the goals of the Federal and State *Adoption and Safe Families Acts* [Public Law 105-89; Laws of 1999, ch. 7] and permanency legislation [Laws of 2005, ch. 3], the Committee is resubmitting its proposal to assure that the Family Court, the parties and attorneys for children are promptly informed of any changes in placement that may warrant Court intervention. Equally critical, in an effort to effectuate the *ASFA* precept that safety of the child is paramount, the proposal would also require prompt notice of any indicated child abuse or maltreatment reports. The proposal would amend Family Court Act §§1055 and 1089, as well as Social Services Law §§358-a, to require an agency with which a child has been placed, either voluntarily or as a result of an abuse or neglect finding, or to whom guardianship and custody has been transferred as a result of the child being freed for adoption, to report any change in the child's placement status within 30 days to the Court, the parties and the attorney for the child, and to report any indicated reports of child abuse or maltreatment. Changes of placement would include, but not be limited to, cases in which the child has been moved from the foster or pre-adoptive home or program into which he or she has been placed, cases in which the foster or pre-adoptive parents move out of state with the child, and cases in which the child has been discharged from foster care on a trial or final basis.

8. Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) and Juvenile Delinquency proceedings: procedures for admissions and violations of orders of disposition and adjournment in contemplation of dismissal: To fill gaps in the post-dispositional procedures applicable in juvenile delinquency and PINS cases, the Committee is submitting a proposal clarifying the various provisions of Articles 3 and 7 of the Family Court Act regarding violations by juveniles. First, the proposal clarifies that, as in probation violation cases, the period of a conditional discharge would be tolled during the pendency of a violation petition. *See Matter of Donald MM*, 231 A.D.2d 810, 647 N.Y.S.2d 312 (3rd Dept., 1996). Second, the proposal delineates the procedures and time frames for restoring cases adjourned in contemplation of dismissal to the calendar for an adjudicatory or dispositional hearing. *See Matter of Edwin L.*, 88 N.Y.2d 593 (1996). Third, the proposal would permit allegations in probation violation petitions to be supported by hearsay evidence, although the ultimate proof would have to be competent. Fourth, the proposal would toll juvenile delinquency placements with county Departments of Social Services where the juveniles have absconded, as is already the law where juveniles abscond from placements with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Fifth, it would delineate the procedures for violations of suspended judgment and probation, drawing upon existing juvenile delinquency provisions. *See F.C.A. §§360.2, 360.3*. Finally, with respect to the fact-finding stage of PINS proceedings, in response to a long line of appellate cases, the proposal would add a new section 743 to the Family Court Act, establishing a judicial allocution procedure for accepting admissions in PINS cases, analogous to the allocution provision in juvenile delinquency cases [Family Court Act §321.3].

9. Modification of orders of child support: The enactment of the “cost of living adjustment” (COLA) provisions in the child support statute, pursuant to the Federal *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* [Public Law 104-193], created a disparity in the ability of litigants in child support matters to obtain modifications of child support orders. Only those cases covered by the COLA provisions – cases in which custodial parents are on public assistance, which are adjusted every three years automatically, and cases in which custodial parents request child support services in accordance with Title IV-D of the Federal *Social Security Act*, which are adjusted upon request – are subject to periodic modification. In accordance with the Court of Appeals decision in Tompkins County Support Collection Unit on behalf of Linda S. Chamberlin v. Boyd M. Chamberlin, 99 N.Y.2d 328 (2003), a challenge to a COLA brings up the whole child support order for review, not simply the COLA itself. Those cases not covered by the COLA provisions are limited to the traditional prerequisites for modification, a change in circumstances or newly discovered evidence. The Committee proposes to remedy this disparity by authorizing applications to modify all child support orders at three year intervals or when the gross income of either party has changed in excess of 15%.

10. Compensation of guardians ad litem: Filling a significant gap in the statutory structure regarding appointments of guardians *ad litem*, the Committee is re-submitting its proposal to authorize public funding for guardians *ad litem* in those civil proceedings in which private compensation is not available.

* * *

In addition to its legislative efforts, the Committee recommended amendments to the *Uniform Rules of the Family Court* to implement Federal and State legislation. The Committee continued to assist the New York State Judicial Institute in providing training regarding the new laws, to spur compliance with court-related Federal foster care eligibility requirements and to participate in the development of a comprehensive initiative to reorganize the handling of child protective proceedings in the New York City Family Court. The Committee also developed and revised over 60 of the official Family Court forms for pleadings, process and orders. The forms and court rules have been placed on the Internet for easy access by attorneys, litigants and the public. See <http://www.nycourts.gov>.

The Committee encourages comments and suggestions concerning legislative proposals and the on-going revision of Family Court rules and forms from interested members of the bench, bar, academic community and public, and invites submission of comments, suggestions and inquiries to:

Hon. Monica Drinane and Peter Passidomo, Esq., Co-Chairs
Janet R. Fink, Counsel
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II. New or Modified Measures

1. Conditional surrenders of parental rights in Family and Surrogate's Court (D.R.L. §112-b; F. C.A. §262; S.S.L. §§383-c, 384)

As noted by the Court of Appeals in Matter of Jacob, 86 N.Y.2d 651 (1995), the legislation enacted in 1990 authorizing surrenders of parental rights to contain conditions including, among others, designation of specific adoptive parents and delineation of post-adoption contact, reflected the first recognition of “open adoptions” under New York State Law. *See* Laws of 1990, ch. 479. This legislation and its subsequent amendments created a framework to enable parents surrendering children to authorized child care agencies for the purposes of adoption to be able to seek judicial enforcement of agreed-upon conditions to the extent that the conditions comport with the children's best interests. With detailed provisions for the birth parents to receive notice of the consequences of their surrenders, sections 383-c and 384 of the Social Services Law were designed to ensure that birth parents would be fully aware of the ramifications of their surrenders and the remedies for enforcement of the conditions. Coupled with the provisions of Domestic Relations Law §112-b, which requires that agreements for post-adoption contact be approved by the Court as being in the children's best interests in order to be enforceable, the statutes were designed to provide judicial oversight that would fulfill the children's best interests through procedures that are fair to birth parents, adoptive parents, authorized agencies and, most important, the children.

Unfortunately, two decades of experience have revealed all too many cases in which these legislative goals have not been met and in which what appeared to be plain terms of the statutes have not been followed. All too frequently, birth parents have been induced to execute surrenders, particularly extra-judicial surrenders, upon the assumption that informal agreements or side letters of understanding would be enforceable even though they were not presented to the Family or Surrogate's Court for approval and were not incorporated into any written court order. Although surrenders of children in foster care must contain notices in “conspicuous bold print on the first page” of the right to counsel, including the right to appointed counsel if indigent, many birth parents executing surrenders are unrepresented, particularly surrenders pursuant to Social Services Law §384 of children who are not in foster care, as well as extra-judicial surrenders of children both in and out of foster care that are executed by birth mothers while in the hospital immediately after the births. *See* Social Services Law §§383-c(5)(b).²

In light of these deviations from the clear intent and letter of the statute, the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is submitting a proposal explicitly requiring that all conditions accompanying surrenders, both of children in and out of foster care, must be approved by the Family

² Notwithstanding Social Services Law §§383-c(5)(b), section 262 of the Family Court Act does not enumerate that statute in its list of categories of cases in which indigent parents have a right to counsel. Ironically, while Social Services Law §384 contains no reference to counsel, that section is included in Family Court Act §262(a)(iv). The Committee's proposal would correct both of these omissions. Significantly, in the case of extra-judicial surrenders, the right to appointed counsel for indigent parents is unevenly implemented because such surrenders do not need to be approved by the Family or Surrogate's Court to be “valid” (or, in the case of surrenders of children in foster care, to trigger the time-limit for irrevocability), even if conditions contained within them must be court-approved in order to be enforceable. *See* Social Services Law §§383-c(6)(b); 384(4).

or Surrogate's Court as being in the child's best interests and must be incorporated into a court order in order to be enforceable. To underscore the need for judicial oversight, the proposal prohibits extra-judicial surrenders executed on or after the effective date of the statute (January 1, 2011) from containing any conditions. Only judicial surrenders executed on or after that date, under the Committee's proposal, could contain enforceable conditions and birth parents executing surrenders would have to be so advised. Agreements for post-adoption contact between the surrendered child and birth siblings and half-siblings, where either the child and/or siblings or half-siblings are 14 years of age or older, would likewise require their written consent in order to be enforceable. A copy of the court order incorporating any post-adoption contact agreement or other conditions must be given to all parties to the agreement. The proposal would also correct the omissions in Family Court Act §262 and Social Services Law §384 with respect to the right to counsel for surrendering parents. Social Services Law §383-c would be added to the categories of cases for which there is a right to appointed counsel for indigent adults and the provision regarding notice of the right to counsel contained in Social Services Law §383-c would be added to Social Services Law §384(4).

The need for enactment of the Committee's proposal is illustrated by the case of Matter of the Adoption of Jack *ex rel.* David B., 18 Misc.3d 397 (Fam. Ct., Monroe Co., 2007). In that case, the Family Court deferred finalization of an adoption pending execution of new surrenders by the child's birth parents, because the original extra-judicial surrenders, executed by birth parents, referred to an agreement for post-adoption contact, but neither the extra-judicial surrenders, nor the agreement, had been presented to the Court for approval. The Court noted that the proposed adoptive parents and birth parents intended the post-adoption contact agreement "to be exempt from court review and not enforceable in court," which it found "particularly troubling, because the birth parents did not have counsel and because the terms of the agreement are not included in the surrender." With no judicial review of the agreement, no attorney for the child had been appointed, no best interests determination had been made and no clarity was offered as to the extent of post-adoption contact contemplated to occur following execution of the surrender but prior to the adoption finalization. The existence of this unenforceable "side agreement" was deemed to "cast[] a cloud over the surrenders themselves." The Court stated:

...Agreements made outside of the surrender instrument, especially made by birth parents unrepresented by counsel, leave the court with no way of knowing whether impermissible inducements contributed to the signing of the instrument and leave the surrender open for challenge in the future by the birth parents.

It was precisely the need to avoid unenforceable or impermissibly induced side agreements in adoptions that led the legislature to amend Social Services Law §384 to provide a procedure for enforceable post-adoption agreements that balance the rights of the parents and proposed adoptive parents within the context of the child's best interest (*see* L. 2005, Ch. 3, eff. August 23, 2005). ...By defining the right to enforce post-adoption contact agreements and providing judicial oversight to assure that agreements promote the child's best interest, the statutory framework has reduced or avoided possible litigation.

It is this court's view that the parties are not permitted to agree to terms that contradict the statutory requirements or the purpose of the statute, which is to clarify and protect the rights of birth parents, prospective adoptive parents and promote the best interests of the child.

Declining to accept the surrenders, the Court held:

The existence of an unenforceable side agreement for post-adoption contact made by unrepresented parents, which has not been provided to the court or reviewed by any court, creates doubts as to whether the surrenders were knowingly and voluntarily executed by the birth parents. Moreover, the failure of the adoption agency to apply to Erie County Surrogate's Court for approval of the surrender means that there has been no best interest review of the surrender.

Matter of the Adoption of Jack ex rel. David B., regrettably, was not an isolated case. Apparently, side agreements never presented to any court for approval have become common practice statewide and clearly thwart the clear intent of the Legislature in enacting the conditional surrender provisions of Social Services Law §§383-c and 384, as well as the requirements for post-adoption contact agreements in Domestic Relations Law §112-b. Enactment of the Committee's proposal would ensure necessary judicial oversight, thereby protecting both the fairness of the surrender process for all parties and the best interests of the children involved.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the domestic relations law and social services law, in relation to conditional surrenders of parental rights in Family and Surrogate's Court

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivisions 1, 2 and 4 of section 112-b of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

1. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the parties to a proceeding under this chapter from entering into an agreement regarding communication with or contact between an adoptive child, adoptive parent or parents and a birth parent or parents and/or the adoptive child's biological siblings or half-siblings, provided, however, that such an agreement shall not be legally enforceable unless the terms of the agreement have been incorporated into a written order that has been approved and entered by the court in accordance with subdivision two of this section.

2. Agreements regarding communication or contact between an adoptive child, adoptive parent or parents, and a birth parent or parents and/or biological siblings or half-siblings of an adoptive child in an adoption from an authorized agency shall not be legally enforceable unless the terms of the agreement are incorporated into a written court order entered in accordance with the provisions of this section. An agreement for contact or communication between the child and his or her siblings or half-siblings where the child and/or siblings or half-siblings are fourteen years of age

or older shall not be enforceable unless such child, sibling or half-sibling consents to the agreement in writing. The court shall not incorporate an agreement regarding communication or contact into an order unless the terms and conditions of the agreement have been set forth in writing and consented to in writing by the parties to the agreement, including the [law guardian] attorney representing the adoptive child. The court shall not enter a proposed order unless the court in which the surrender was executed or, with respect to extra-judicial surrenders executed before January 1, 2011, the court that approved the surrender of the child determined and stated in its order that the communication with or contact between the adoptive child, the prospective adoptive parent or parents and a birth parent or parents and/or biological siblings or half-siblings, as agreed upon and as set forth in the agreement, would be in the adoptive child's best interests. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a copy of the order entered pursuant to this section incorporating the post-adoption contact agreement shall be given to all parties who have agreed to the terms and conditions of such order.

4. An order incorporating an agreement regarding communication or contact entered under this section may be enforced by any party to the agreement or the [law guardian] child's attorney by filing a petition in the family court in the county where the adoption was approved. Such petition shall have annexed to it a copy of the order approving the agreement regarding communication or contact. The court shall not enforce an order under this section unless it finds that the enforcement is in the child's best interests.

§2. Paragraph (iv) of subdivision (a) of section 262 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

(iv) the parent, foster parent, or other person having physical or legal custody of the child in any proceeding under article ten or ten-A of this act or section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, and a non-custodial parent or grandparent served with notice pursuant to paragraph (e) of subdivision two of section three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law;

§3. Subdivision 2 of section 383-c of the social services law, as amended by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended by adding a new paragraph (c) to such subdivision to read as follows:

(c) Where the parent executing a judicial surrender enters into an agreement containing conditions, including, but not limited to, identifying the prospective adoptive parent or parents or prescribing communication or contact with the child and the adoptive parent or parents and/or

between the child and his or her biological siblings or half-siblings following the surrender and adoption of the child, the agreement shall not be legally enforceable unless:

(i) for surrenders executed on or after January 1, 2011, the surrender is executed before a judge;

(ii) the terms of the agreement are approved by the court and incorporated into a written court order entered in accordance with the provisions of this subdivision;

(iii).the terms and conditions of the agreement have been set forth in writing and consented to in writing by the parties to the agreement, including the attorney representing the child;

(iv) the court determined and stated in its order that the terms and conditions as agreed upon and as set forth in the agreement would be in the child's best interests;

(v) in the case of an agreement for contact or communication between the child and his or her siblings or half-siblings where the child and/or siblings or half-siblings are fourteen years of age or older, the child and sibling or half-sibling consents to the agreement in writing.

The written order approving the agreement shall be issued at the time the parent executes a judicial surrender or, with respect to extra-judicial surrenders executed before January 1, 2011, at the time the court approves the surrender. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a copy of the order entered pursuant to this section incorporating the post-surrender and post-adoption contact agreement shall be given to all parties who have agreed to the terms and conditions of such order.

§4. Subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (b) of subdivision 4 of section 383-c of the social services law, as amended by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended and a new paragraph (g) is added to such section to read as follows:

(iii) that the surrender was read in full to the parent in his or her principal language and the parent was given an opportunity to ask questions and obtain answers regarding the nature and consequences of the surrender, including, with respect to surrenders executed before January 1, 2011, the consequences of, and procedures to be followed in, cases of a substantial failure of a material condition, if any, contained in the surrender instrument and the obligation to provide the authorized agency with a designated mailing address, as well as any subsequent changes in such address, at which the parent may receive notices regarding any substantial failure of a material condition, unless such notification is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument; and

(g) An extra-judicial surrender may not be executed on or after January 1, 2011 in any case in which any agreement containing conditions is made with the surrendering parent or parents,

including, but not limited to, an agreement identifying the prospective adoptive parent or parents or prescribing communication or contact by the surrendering parent or parents with the child and the adoptive parent or parents and/or between the child and his or her biological siblings or half-siblings following the child's surrender and adoption. Any such agreement is only legally enforceable if approved by the court and incorporated into a written court order entered in conjunction with the execution of a judicial surrender pursuant to paragraph (c) of subdivision two of this section.

§5. Subparagraphs (ii) and (iii) of paragraph (b), the opening paragraph of paragraph (c) and the opening paragraph of subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (d) of subdivision 5 of section 383-c of the social services law, as amended by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

(ii) that the parent is giving up all rights to have custody, visit with, speak with, write to or learn about the child, forever, unless, with respect to an extra-judicial surrender executed before January 1, 2011 or a judicial surrender, the parties have agreed to different terms pursuant to subdivision two of this section[,] and unless such terms are written in the surrender, or, if the parent registers with the adoption information register, as specified in section forty-one hundred thirty-eight-d of the public health law, that the parent may be contacted at anytime after the child reaches the age of eighteen years, but only if both the parent and the adult child so choose;

(iii) that the child will be adopted without the parent's consent and without further notice to the parent, and will be adopted by any person that the agency chooses, unless, with respect to an extra-judicial surrender executed before January 1, 2011 or a judicial surrender, the surrender paper contains the name of the person or persons who will be adopting the child; and

(c) A surrender instrument for a judicial surrender also shall state in plain language in conspicuous bold print at the beginning thereof that the surrender becomes final and irrevocable immediately upon execution and acknowledgement, and that the parent cannot bring a case in court to revoke the surrender or to regain custody of the child. [Where] With respect to an extra-judicial surrender executed before January 1, 2011 or a judicial surrender, where the parties have agreed that the surrender shall be subject to conditions pursuant to subdivision two of this section, the instrument shall further state in plain language that:

(iii) that a revocation of the surrender more than forty-five days after its signing will not be effective if the child has been placed in an adoptive home, and the surrender shall be final and irrevocable and the parent cannot revoke the surrender or bring a case in court to revoke the surrender or regain custody of the child, and that the agency will not notify the parent when the child

is placed in an adoptive home, and the parent may lose all rights at the end of the forty-five day period without further notice. [Where] With respect to a surrender executed before January 1, 2011, where the parties have agreed that the surrender shall be subject to conditions pursuant to subdivision two of this section, the instrument shall further state in plain language that:

§6. Subdivision 7 of section 383-c, as added by chapter 479 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

7. Surrenders by persons in foster care and surrenders executed on or after January 1, 2011 in which an agreement containing condition has been made. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a surrender for adoption executed by a parent, parents or guardian who is in foster care and a surrender executed on or after January 1, 2011 containing conditions shall be executed only before a judge of the family court. ____

§7. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 2 of section 384 of the social services law is amended to read as follows:

(b) If a surrender instrument designates a particular person or persons who will adopt a child, such person or persons, the child's birth parent or parents, the authorized agency having care and custody of the child and the child's [law guardian] attorney, may enter into a written agreement providing for communication or contact between the child and the child's parent or parents on such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the parties. If a surrender instrument does not designate a particular person or persons who will adopt the child, then the child's birth parent or parents, the authorized agency having care and custody of the child and the child's [law guardian] attorney may enter into a written agreement providing for communication or contact, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the parties. Such agreement also may provide terms and conditions for communication with or contact between the child and the child's biological sibling or half-sibling, if any. If the child or any such sibling or half-sibling is fourteen years of age or older, [such terms and conditions] an agreement for contact or communication between the child and his or her siblings or half-siblings shall not be enforceable unless such child, sibling or half-sibling consents to the agreement in writing. Any provision in a surrender instrument identifying a prospective adoptive parent or parents or any agreement under this section containing any conditions, including, but not limited to, identifying the prospective adoptive parent or parents or prescribing communication or contact shall not be legally enforceable unless the terms and conditions are approved by the court and incorporated into a written court order entered in accordance with the

provisions of this paragraph and, with respect to surrenders executed on or after January 1, 2011, unless the surrender is executed before a judge. The court shall not incorporate an agreement under this section into an order unless the terms and conditions of the agreement have been set forth in writing and consented to in writing by the parties to the agreement, including the attorney representing the child. If the court before which the surrender instrument is presented for execution or, if, with respect to an extra-judicial surrender executed before January 1, 2011, approval, determines that the agreement [concerning communication and contact] is in the child's best interests, the court shall so state in its order and shall approve the agreement. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a copy of the order entered pursuant to this section incorporating the agreement shall be given to all parties who have agreed to the terms and conditions of such order. If the court does not approve the agreement, the court may nonetheless approve the surrender; provided, however, that the birth parent or parents executing the surrender instrument shall be given the opportunity at that time to withdraw such instrument. Enforcement of any agreement prior to the adoption of the child shall be in accordance with subdivision (b) of section one thousand fifty-five-a of the family court act. Subsequent to the adoption of the child, enforcement of any agreement shall be in accordance with section one hundred twelve-b of the domestic relations law.

§8. Subdivision 3 of section 384 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 185 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

3. Instrument and intervention. (a) The instrument herein provided shall be executed and acknowledged [(a)](i) before any judge or surrogate in this state having jurisdiction over adoption proceedings, except that if the child is being surrendered as a result of, or in connection with, a proceeding before the family court pursuant to article ten or ten-A of the family court act, the instrument shall be executed and acknowledged in the family court that exercised jurisdiction over such proceeding and shall be assigned, wherever practicable, to the judge who last presided over such proceeding; or [(b)](ii) in the presence of one or more witnesses and acknowledged by such witness or witnesses, in the latter case before a notary public or other officer authorized to take proof of deeds, and shall be recorded in the office of the county clerk in the county where such instrument is executed, or where the principal office of such authorized agency is located, in a book which such county clerk shall provide and shall keep under seal.

(b) Such record shall be subject to inspection and examination only as provided in subdivisions three and four of section three hundred seventy-two of this title.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the parent surrendering the child for adoption is in foster care or if the surrender is executed on or after January 1, 2011 and contains conditions, the instrument shall be executed before a judge of the family court.

(d) Whenever the term surrender or surrender instrument is used in any law relating to the adoption of children who are not in foster care, it shall mean and refer exclusively to the instrument [hereinabove] described in this subdivision for the commitment of the guardianship of the person and the custody of a child to an authorized agency by his parents, parent or guardian; and in no case shall it be deemed to apply to any instrument purporting to commit the guardianship of the person and the custody of a child to any person other than an authorized agency, nor shall such term or the provisions of this section be deemed to apply to any instrument transferring the care and custody of a child to an authorized agency pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-a of this chapter.

(e) (i) Any person or persons having custody of a child for the purpose of adoption through an authorized agency shall be permitted as a matter of right, as an interested party, to intervene in any proceeding commenced to set aside a surrender purporting to commit a guardianship of the person or custody of a child executed under the provisions of this section. Such intervention may be made anonymously or in the true name of said person.

(ii) Any person or persons having custody for more than twelve months through an authorized agency for the purpose of foster care shall be permitted as a matter of right, as an interested party, to intervene in any proceeding commenced to set aside a surrender purporting to commit the guardianship of the person and custody of a child executed under the provisions of this section. Such intervention may be made anonymously or in the true name of said person or persons having custody of the child for the purpose of foster care.

(f) A copy of such surrender shall be given to [such] the surrendering parent upon the execution thereof. The surrender shall include the following statement: "I, (name of surrendering parent), this ___ day of _____, _____, have received a copy of this surrender. (Signature of surrendering parent)". Such surrendering parent shall so acknowledge the delivery and the date of the delivery in writing on the surrender.

[Where] (g) With respect to an extra-judicial surrender executed before January 1, 2011 or a judicial surrender, where the parties have agreed that the surrender shall be subject to conditions pursuant to subdivision two of this section, the instrument shall further state in plain language that:

(i) the authorized agency shall notify the parent, unless such notice is expressly waived by

a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument, the [law guardian] attorney for the child and the court that approved the surrender within twenty days of any substantial failure of a material condition of the surrender prior to the finalization of the adoption of the child; and

(ii) except for good cause shown, the authorized agency shall file a petition on notice to the parent unless notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument and [law guardian] attorney for the child in accordance with section one thousand fifty-five-a of the family court act within thirty days of such failure, in order for the court to review such failure and, where necessary, to hold a hearing; provided, however, that, in the absence of such filing, the parent and/or [law guardian] attorney for the child may file such a petition at any time up to sixty days after notification of such failure. Such petition filed by a parent or [law guardian] attorney for the child must be filed prior to the adoption of the child; and

(iii) the parent is obligated to provide the authorized agency with a designated mailing address, as well as any subsequent changes in such address, at which the parent may receive notices regarding any substantial failure of a material condition, unless such notification is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument.

Nothing in this paragraph shall limit the notice on the instrument with respect to a failure to comply with a material condition of a surrender subsequent to the finalization of the adoption of the child.

§9. Subdivision 4 of section 384 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 185 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

4. Upon petition by an authorized agency, a judge of the family court, or a surrogate, may approve such surrender, on such notice to such persons as the surrogate or judge may in his or her discretion prescribe. If the child is being surrendered as a result of, or in connection with, a proceeding before the family court pursuant to article ten or ten-A of the family court act, the petition shall be filed in the family court that exercised jurisdiction over such proceeding and shall be assigned, wherever practicable, to the judge who last presided over such proceeding. The petition shall set forth the names and last known addresses of all persons required to be given notice of the proceeding, pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-c of this title, and there shall be shown by the petition or by affidavit or other proof satisfactory to the court that there are no

persons other than those set forth in the petition who are entitled to notice pursuant to such section. At the time that a parent appears before a judge or surrogate to execute and acknowledge a surrender or for the judge to approve the surrender, the judge or surrogate shall inform such parent of the right to be represented by legal counsel of the parent's own choosing and of the right to obtain supportive counseling and of any right to have counsel assigned pursuant to section two hundred sixty-two of the family court act, section four hundred seven of the surrogate's court procedure act, or section thirty-five of the judiciary law. No person who has received such notice and been afforded an opportunity to be heard may challenge the validity of a surrender approved pursuant to this subdivision in any other proceeding. However, this subdivision shall not be deemed to require approval of a surrender by a surrogate or judge for such surrender to be valid.

§10. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2011.

2. Adjournments in contemplation of dismissal and suspended judgments in child abuse and neglect proceedings (F.C.A. §§1039, 1053, 1071)

Long-standing uncertainty regarding the consequences of adjournments in contemplation of dismissal and suspended judgments in child protective proceedings has hindered the ability of the Family Courts to utilize these important mechanisms for resolving child protective cases without the need for more drastic alternatives, such as out-of-home foster care placements. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is, therefore, submitting a proposal to clarify and fill gaps in the statutory framework with respect to both of these options.

The proposal would make clear that an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal may be ordered either before the entry of a fact-finding order or before the entry of a final disposition. It would maintain the current law permitting an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal to be ordered upon the consent of the parties and child's attorney prior to the entry of a fact-finding order. Preserving the 1990 amendment to Family Court Act §1039(e) that followed from the Court of Appeals decision in Matter of Marie B., 62 N.Y.2d 352 (1984), if the Family Court finds a violation of the conditions of the adjournment and restores the matter to the Family Court calendar, the parent would be entitled to a fact-finding hearing on the original child abuse or neglect petition prior to the case advancing to the dispositional stage. Eliminating the confusing and overly limiting phrase "upon a fact-finding hearing," the proposal makes clear that an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal may instead be ordered "[a]fter the entry of a fact-finding order but prior to the entry of a dispositional order." In such a case, the consent of the petitioner child protective agency and child's attorney would not be required but both would have a right to be heard regarding their positions. In the event the matter is restored to the Family Court calendar as a result of a violation of the conditions of the adjournment, the matter would proceed to disposition no later than thirty days after the application to restore the matter to the calendar, unless an extension for "good cause" is granted by the Court. In all cases, the Family Court would have to state reasons on the record for adjourning a case in contemplation of dismissal.

The proposal also clarifies that an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal may be extended for up to one year, either upon consent of the parties and child's attorney (if prior to fact-finding) or for good cause (if after fact-finding and prior to disposition). If a violation of the conditions of the adjournment is alleged, the adjournment period is tolled pending a determination regarding the alleged violation. Additionally, sixty days prior to the expiration of the adjournment, the child protective agency must submit a report to the Family Court, parties and child's attorney regarding compliance with the conditions. If there has been no violation of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, the petition would be deemed dismissed.

During the period of the adjournment, the Family Court would not be authorized to place the child pursuant to Family Court Act §1055 and the adjournment may not be conditioned upon the child's voluntary placement pursuant to Social Services Law §358-a. Unless necessary for the child's protection, pursuant to Family Court Act §1027(a)(iii), pending the resolution of an application to restore a matter to the Family Court calendar because of a violation, the child would not be able to be removed from home during the adjournment period. These amendments are necessary in light of the fact that children remanded or placed in foster care, notwithstanding the adjournment

in contemplation of dismissal of the underlying proceeding, are not eligible for Federal foster care reimbursement under Title IV-E of the *Social Security Act*. It goes without saying that if the case warrants dismissal following a period of adjournment, the Court would not be able to find that retention in the home would be contrary to the child's best interests, as is required by the New York State and Federal *Adoption and Safe Families Acts* for Federal foster care eligibility. See Family Court Act §1027(b); Social Services Law §358-a(3); Public Law 105-89.

Like the provisions regarding adjournments in contemplation of dismissal, the dispositional alternative of suspended judgment in child protective cases has long generated confusion, because the Family Court Act is largely silent regarding procedures for its issuance, as well as its ultimate consequences. Similar to the amendments made in 2005 and 2006 to Family Court Act §633,³ the suspended judgment provisions applicable to permanent neglect cases, the proposal would amend Family Court Act §1053 to require that the order suspending judgment contain the duration, terms and conditions of the order. The order would also require a warning in conspicuous print that failure to comply may lead to its revocation and to issuance of any other order of disposition that might have been made under Family Court Act §1052 at the time the judgment was suspended. A copy of the order must be furnished to the respondent.

The proposal would add clarity regarding procedures applicable when a parent has successfully complied with the conditions of a suspended judgment. The order suspending judgment must include a date for a review by the Court and parties of the parent's compliance no later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the suspended judgment period. In addition to the existing requirements for progress reports 90 days after issuance of the order and as ordered by the Court, the proposal would require a report no later than 60 days prior to the suspended judgment's expiration. Consistent with the observation of the Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Third Department, in Matter of Baby Girl W., 245 A.D.2d 830 (3rd Dept., 1997), the Committee's proposal provides that at the end of a successful period of a suspended judgment, the underlying order of fact-finding would not automatically be vacated; nor would the report on the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment automatically be sealed or expunged. Rather, as in Matter of Makynli N., 17 Misc.3d 1127(A), 2007 N.Y.Slip Op. 52162 (Fam. Ct., Monroe Co., 2007)(Unreported), the parent could apply to the Family Court, pursuant to Family Court Act §1061, for an order vacating the order of fact-finding and dismissing the proceeding in accordance with subdivision (c) of section 1051 of the Family Court Act on the ground that the aid of the Court is no longer required and that the dismissal would be in the children's best interests. Such a dismissal would then provide the parent with grounds to seek administrative relief in terms of sealing or expungement of the State Central Register report. As the Family Court, Monroe County, noted in its earlier opinion in the case,

[A] suspended judgment neither condones Respondent's neglectful action, nor does it necessarily eradicate the finding. [Citation omitted].

Matter of MN, 16 Misc.3d 499, 506 (Fam. Ct., Monroe Co., 2007). Significantly, it is the requirement of this procedural step, *i.e.*, the motion under Family Court Act §1061, that distinguishes the outcome of a successful suspended judgment from that of an adjournment in

³ See Laws of 2005, ch. 3; Laws of 2006, ch. 437.

contemplation of dismissal. A suspended judgment may thus be an appropriate disposition in cases in which the Court determines that a full dismissal of the proceedings, including vacatur of the fact-finding, should not be automatic.

Concomitantly, the Committee's proposal amends the procedures to be followed in the event that the parent does not comply with the conditions of a suspended judgment. While chapter 519 of the Laws of 2008 amended Family Court Act §1052(a) to clarify that a disposition of suspended judgment may not be combined with that of placement of a child, there may be cases where a temporary removal of child may be necessary pending the outcome of a motion or order to show cause alleging a violation of a suspended judgment. Thus, just as a Family Court may remove a child from home if necessary for the child's protection pending disposition of a child protective proceeding, pursuant to Family Court Act §1027(a)(iii), so, too, the Committee's proposal would permit the convening of a hearing and, if needed, the temporary removal of child from his or her home pending the resolution of a violation proceeding.

The Committee's proposal provides needed clarity to both the provisions regarding adjournments in contemplation of dismissal and the disposition of suspended judgment, thus enhancing the usefulness of these options for the resolution of child abuse and neglect proceedings in Family Court. Both of these options are critically important to promote and preserve the well-being of children and their families by providing opportunities for families to access services in order to repair the problems that precipitated court action without the disruption and, all too often, the trauma of out-of-home placement.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to adjournments in contemplation of dismissal and suspended judgments in child protective proceedings in the family court

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 1039 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 323 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Prior to [or upon] the entry of a fact-finding [hearing] order, the court may, upon a motion by the petitioner with the consent of the respondent and the child's attorney [or law guardian] or upon its own motion with the consent of the petitioner, the respondent and the child's attorney [or law guardian], order that the proceeding be ["adjourned in contemplation of dismissal."] Under no circumstances shall the court order any party to consent to an order prior to the entry of a fact-finding order under this section. After entry of a fact-finding order but prior to the entry of a dispositional order, the court may, upon motion of the petitioner or respondent or upon its own motion without requiring the consent of the parties, order that the proceeding be "adjourned in contemplation of

dismissal." The petitioner, respondent and attorney for the child have a right to be heard with respect to the motion. The court may make such order only after it has apprised the respondent of the provisions of this section and it is satisfied that the respondent understands the effect of such provisions. The court shall state its reasons on the record for ordering an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal under this section.

(b) An adjournment in contemplation of dismissal is an adjournment of the proceeding for a period not to exceed one year with a view to ultimate dismissal of the petition in furtherance of justice. Upon the consent of the petitioner, the respondent and the child's attorney [or law guardian], the court may issue an order extending [such] the period of an adjournment issued pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section prior to the entry of a fact-finding order for such time and upon such conditions as may be agreeable to the parties. For good cause shown, the court may issue an order extending an adjournment issued pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section after entry of a fact-finding order for such time and upon such conditions as may be in the best interests of the child or children who are the subjects of the proceeding.

(c) [Such] The order [may] shall include terms and conditions [agreeable to the parties and to the court, provided that such terms and conditions] in furtherance of the best interests of the child or children who are the subjects of the proceeding and shall include, but not be limited to, a requirement that the child and the respondent be under the supervision of a child protective agency during the adjournment period. Except as provided in subdivision (g), an order pursuant to section one thousand seventeen, part two, or section one thousand fifty-five of this article shall not be made in any case adjourned under this section; nor shall an order under this section contain a condition requiring the child or children to be placed voluntarily pursuant to sections three hundred fifty-eight and three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law. In any order issued pursuant to this section, [such] the child protective agency shall be directed to make a progress report to the court, the parties and the child's [law guardian] or children's attorney on the implementation of such order, no later than [ninety] sixty days [after] before the [issuance] expiration of such order[, unless the court determines that the facts and circumstances of the case do not require such reports to be made]. The child protective agency shall make further reports to the court, the parties and the [law guardian] attorney for the child or children in such manner and at such times as the court may direct.

(d) Upon application of the respondent, the petitioner[,] or the [child's] attorney [or law

guardian] for the child or children or upon the court's own motion, made at any time during the duration of the order, if the child protective agency has failed substantially to provide the respondent with adequate supervision or to observe the terms and conditions of the order, the court may direct the child protective agency to observe such terms and conditions and provide adequate supervision or may make any order authorized pursuant to section two hundred fifty-five of this act.

(e) [Upon application of] If, prior to the expiration of the period of adjournment, a motion or order to show cause is filed by the petitioner or the [child's] attorney [or law guardian,] for the child or children, or upon the court's own motion, made at any time during the duration of the order, [the] that alleges a violation of the terms and conditions of the adjournment, the period of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal is tolled until the entry of an order disposing of the motion or order to show cause. The court may revoke the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal and restore the matter to the calendar, if the court finds after a hearing that the respondent has failed substantially to observe the terms and conditions of the order or to cooperate with the supervising child protective agency. In such event:

(i) in the case of an adjournment issued prior to the entry of a fact-finding order, unless the parties consent to an order pursuant to section one thousand fifty-one of this act or unless the petition is dismissed upon the consent of the petitioner, the court shall thereupon proceed to a fact-finding hearing under this article no later than sixty days after [such] the application to restore the matter to the calendar, unless such period is extended by the court for good cause shown.

(ii) in the case of an adjournment issued after the entry of a fact-finding order, the court shall thereupon proceed to a dispositional hearing under this article no later than thirty days after the application to restore the matter to the calendar, unless such period is extended by the court for good cause shown.

(f) If the proceeding is not [so] restored to the calendar as a result of an alleged violation pursuant to subdivision (e) of this section, the petition is, at the expiration of the adjournment period and review of the report by the court, the parties and the attorney for the child or children, deemed to have been dismissed by the court in furtherance of justice [unless an application is pending pursuant to subdivision (e) of this section]. If [such application is granted] the court finds a violation pursuant to subdivision (e) of this section, the petition shall not be dismissed and shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of [such] subdivision (e).

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, if a motion or order to show cause is filed alleging a violation pursuant to subdivision (e) of this section and the court finds that removal of the child from the home is necessary for the child's protection during the pendency of the violation motion or order to show cause, the court may [, at any time prior to dismissal of the petition pursuant to subdivision (f),] issue an order authorized pursuant to paragraph (iii) of subdivision (a) of section one thousand twenty-seven of this article. If the violation is found and the matter is restored to the calendar, the court may make further orders in accordance with subdivision (e) of this section.

§2. Section 1053 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 323 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

§1053. Suspended judgment. (a) Rules of court shall define permissible terms and conditions of a suspended judgment. These terms and conditions shall relate to the acts or omissions of the parent or other person legally responsible for the care of the child or children.

(b) The maximum duration of any term or condition of a suspended judgment is one year, unless the court finds at the conclusion of that period, upon a hearing, that exceptional circumstances require an extension thereof for an additional year.

(c) Except as provided for herein, in any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the child protective agency to make progress reports to the court, the parties, and the child's [law guardian] or children's attorney on the implementation of such order. Where the order of disposition is issued upon the consent of the parties and the child's [law guardian] or children's attorney, such agency shall report to the court, the parties and the child's [law guardian] or children's attorney no later than ninety days after the issuance of the order, unless the court determines that the facts and circumstances of the case do not require such report to be made.

(d) The order of suspended judgment must set forth the duration, terms and conditions of the suspended judgment, and must contain a date certain for a court review not later than thirty days prior to the expiration of the period of suspended judgment. The order of suspended judgment must also state in conspicuous print that a failure to obey the order may lead to its revocation and to the issuance of any order that might have been made at the time judgment was suspended. A copy of the order of suspended judgment must be furnished to the respondent.

(e) Not later than sixty days before the expiration of the period of suspended judgment, the

petitioner shall file a report with the family court and all parties, including the respondent and his or her attorney, the attorney for the child or children and intervenors, if any, regarding the respondent's compliance with the terms of suspended judgment. The report shall be reviewed by the court on the scheduled court date. Unless a motion or order to show cause has been filed prior to the expiration of the period of suspended judgment alleging a violation or seeking an extension of the period of the suspended judgment, the terms of the disposition of suspended judgment shall be deemed satisfied. In such event, the court's jurisdiction over the proceeding shall be terminated. However, the order of fact-finding and the presumptive effect of such finding upon retention of the report of suspected abuse and neglect on the state central register in accordance with paragraph (b) of subdivision eight of section four hundred twenty-two of the social services law shall remain in effect unless the court grants a motion of the respondent to vacate the fact-finding pursuant to section one thousand sixty-one of this article.

_____ §3. Section 1071 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 347 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

§1071. Failure to comply with terms and conditions of suspended judgment. If, prior to the expiration of the period of the suspended judgment, a motion or order to show cause is filed that alleges that a parent or other person legally responsible for a child's care violated the terms and conditions of a suspended judgment issued under section one thousand fifty-three of this article, the period of the suspended judgment shall be tolled pending disposition of the motion or order to show cause. If the court finds that the child's interests require protection through removal of the child from the home pending disposition of the motion or order to show cause, the court may issue an order pursuant to paragraph (iii) of subdivision (a) of section one thousand twenty-seven of this article. If, after hearing, the court is satisfied by competent proof that the parent or other person violated the order of suspended judgment, the court may revoke the suspension of judgment and enter any order that might have been made at the time judgment was suspended.

§4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

3. Service of orders of protection, temporary orders of protection and petitions to modify and enforce orders of protection (F.C.A. §153-b)

Section 153-b of the Family Court Act, enacted in 1994 and amended in 1995, provided important assistance to litigants seeking temporary and final orders of protection by permitting them the option of having peace and police officers serve the orders and accompanying pleadings. *See* Laws of 1994, ch. 46; Laws of 1995, ch. 429. These litigants are often in the midst of serious emergencies, may be seeking protection from dangerous situations, and have neither the wherewithal, nor the economic resources, to arrange for service by a non-party over the age of 18, as required by section 2103(a) of the Civil Practice Law and Rules. Many are not represented by counsel, at least at the early stages of the litigation. In fact, it has been estimated that 75% of the caseload of the New York City Family Court involves self-represented litigants.⁴ Since orders of protection are not enforceable until served, this assistance is critical to victim safety, as well as to advancing the litigation and assuming jurisdiction over the alleged abuser. Coupled with Family Court Act §153-c, which provides litigants with quick access to the court for the purposes of obtaining temporary relief, service of pleadings and orders by law enforcement has been critical to the effectiveness of the Family Court's response to cases of domestic violence.

Similar concerns compel the need for such assistance at later stages of Family Court proceedings regarding orders of protection, specifically when orders are modified and when petitions alleging violations are filed. Again, the nature of the litigation dictates the need for concerns for victim safety, as litigants may be in situations of acute danger. If they elect to prosecute violations criminally, they would necessarily have the benefit of law enforcement assistance and involvement. The fact that they may elect to prosecute civilly instead should not deprive them of needed assistance in serving the papers. Family Court Act §846(c), incorporating Family Court Act §826 by reference, requires attempted personal service prior to substituted service being ordered. Additionally, modified orders, like initial orders of protection, are not enforceable until served and if *in personam* jurisdiction had not yet been obtained over the respondent, personal service may be necessary. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, therefore, is submitting a proposal that would provide litigants with the same options of peace and police officer service for modified orders and for petitions alleging violations of orders of protection as they have for original orders and accompanying pleadings.

The proposal also makes it clear that such service must be available without fee to the litigants. The provision prohibiting fees from being charged by police and peace officers for service of all orders of protection, whether issued upon default, temporary, modified or final, as well as associated petitions and summonses, builds upon legislation enacted in 2007 at the recommendation of the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. That statute amended section 8011 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules to prohibit sheriffs from charging the statutory \$45 fee and

⁴ *Self-Represented Litigants in the New York City Family Court and New York City Housing Court* (Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, NYS Unified Court System, Dec. 2005) at 1.

any mileage fees for service of orders of protection and related orders or papers when service has been directed by the court. *See* Laws of 2007, ch. 36. Recognizing that victims of domestic violence are charged no fees for service of criminal orders of protection and related documents, the statute was intended to:

ensure a statewide policy and practice that would create equity between criminal and civil options, support safety for domestic violence victims, and be consistent with New York's proactive, aggressive response to domestic violence.

McKinney's 2007 Session Laws of New York, Ch. 36, New York State Memorandum in Support of Senate Bill S 4020, p. 1560.

Like the 2007 amendment, the Committee's proposal is essential to ensure compliance by New York State with Federal law. The Federal *Violence Against Women Act* requires all states in receipt of Federal funding under the STOP Formula Grant Program under the *Act* to:

certify that their laws, policies, and practices do not require, in connection with the prosecution of any misdemeanor or felony domestic violence offense, or in connection with the filing, issuance, registration, or service of a protection order, or a petition for a protection order, to protect a victim of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault, that the victim bear the costs associated with the filing of criminal charges against the offender, or the costs associated with the filing, issuance, registration, or service of a warrant, protection order, petition for a protection order, or witness subpoena, whether issued inside or outside the State, tribal, or local jurisdiction[.]

42 U.S.C.A. §3796hh(c)(4).

Lifting the burden from victims of domestic violence of arranging for service of orders of protection has proven to be essential to the effort to make civil prosecution in Family Court an effective avenue of relief. Provision of the same opportunity for law enforcement service with respect to modified orders and petitions for violations of orders is equally critical to that end.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to service of petitions to modify and petitions for violations of orders of protection and temporary orders of protection in family court

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

_____§1. Section 153-b of the family court act, as amended by chapter 429 of the laws of 1995, is

amended to read as follows:

§153-b. Service of process request for order of protection. Whenever a petitioner requests an order of protection or temporary order of protection or files a petition or motion for modification or violation of such an order under any article of this act:

(a) the summons and the petition and, if one has been issued, the temporary order of protection, order of protection issued upon a default, or modified order of protection or temporary order of protection or a copy or copies thereof, may be served on any day of the week, and at any hour of the day or night;

(b) a peace officer, acting pursuant to his or her special duties, or a police officer may serve the summons and the petition and, if one has been issued, the temporary order of protection, order of protection issued upon a default, or modified order of protection or temporary order of protection and shall not charge a fee for such service;

(c) if a temporary order of protection has been issued, or an order of protection has been issued upon a default, or an order of protection or temporary order of protection has been modified, unless the party requesting the order or modification states on the record that she or he will arrange for other means for service or deliver the order to a peace or police officer directly for service, the court shall immediately deliver a copy of the temporary order of protection or order of protection or modified order or temporary order of protection, together with any other papers that may be served simultaneously, to a peace officer, acting pursuant to his or her special duties and designated by the court, or to a police officer as defined in paragraph (b) or (d) of subdivision thirty-four of section 1.20 of the criminal procedure law, or to any other county or municipal officer who may be directed to effect service under section two hundred fifty-five of the family court act, or, in the city of New York, to a designated representative of the police department of the city of New York. Any peace or police officer or designated person receiving a temporary order of protection or an order of protection or modified order or temporary order of protection as provided hereunder shall serve or provide for the service thereof together with any associated papers that may be served simultaneously, at any address designated therewith, including the summons and petition if not previously served. Service of such temporary order of protection, or order of protection, or modified order or temporary order of protection and associated papers, shall insofar as practicable, be achieved promptly. An officer or designated person obliged to perform service pursuant to this

subdivision, and his or her employer, shall not be liable for damages resulting from the failure to achieve service where, having made a reasonable effort, such officer is unable to locate and serve the temporary order of protection or order of protection or modified order of protection or temporary order of protection at any address provided by the party requesting the order.

(d) a statement subscribed by the officer or designated person, and affirmed by him or her to be true under the penalties of perjury, stating the papers served, the date, time, address or in the event there is no address, place, and manner of service, the name and a brief physical description of the party served, shall be proof of the service of the summons, petition and temporary order of protection or order of protection or modified order or temporary order of protection. When the temporary order of protection or order of protection or modified order or temporary order of protection and other papers, if any, have been served, such officer or designated person shall provide the court with an affirmation, certificate or affidavit of service when the temporary order of protection or order of protection has been served and shall provide notification of the date and time of such service to the statewide computer registry established pursuant to section two hundred twenty-one-a of the executive law.

§2. This act shall take effect immediately.

4. Services for youth and permanency planning in juvenile delinquency and persons in need of supervision proceedings
(F.C.A. §§312.1, 320(2), 353.3, 355.3, 355.5, 741, 756, 756-a;
Ed. L. §112; Soc. Ser. L. §409-e)

When the Legislature enacted Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, the landmark child welfare permanency legislation, it deferred consideration of the significant constellation of issues relating to permanency planning and permanency hearings regarding juvenile delinquents and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS). These issues, however, are critically important and should be addressed comprehensively. The permanency hearing provisions, as well as those regarding services to be provided to youth, are vital for the successful resolution of these cases for the youth involved, their families and their communities, and are essential to New York State's compliance with the Federal *Adoption and Safe Families Act* [Public Law 105-89]. Moreover, enhancement of these statutory provisions would provide a crucial element of the comprehensive response needed to the disturbing picture of the New York State juvenile justice system conveyed in the recent reports of the Governor's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, the Citizen's Committee for Children, *Child Welfare Watch* and the United States Department of Justice.⁵

If the Family Court is to be able to exercise its critical monitoring functions and convene meaningful permanency hearings in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings, it must have the benefit of at least the same information that is required to be presented in child welfare proceedings. If the Family Court is to be able to meet its responsibilities to fulfill the needs and best interests of the juveniles and, in juvenile delinquency proceedings, to strike a balance of these factors with the need for protection of the community, the Court must be able to order needed services and have a wide-range of dispositional options available. The Court must make determinations of specificity at least comparable to those in child welfare proceedings and the parties must have the benefit of continuity of legal representation.

To that end, the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has developed a proposal that incorporates essential elements of the child welfare permanency hearing article of the Family Court Act (Article 10-A) into the permanency hearing provisions of Articles 3 and 7 of the Act. It would provide greater specificity regarding the services that must be provided for youth and would expand the alternatives available to the Court both in dispositional and permanency hearings in juvenile delinquency and PINS cases. Briefly, the proposal contains the following provisions:

⁵ See Governor's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, *Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State* (Dec., 2009); Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, *Inside Out: Youth's Experiences Inside New York State's Placement System* (Dec., 2009); *A Need for Correction: Reforming New York's Juvenile Justice System*, 18 *Child Welfare Watch* (Fall, 2009); U.S. Dept. of Justice, "Investigation of Lansing Residential Center, Lou Gossett, Jr. Residential Center, Tryon Residential Center and Tryon Girls Center" (Findings Letter, dated Aug. 14, 2009).

1. Notices to non-custodial parents: To ensure that all possible resources are engaged in the resolution of juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings, the proposal would require that non-custodial parents, if any, be given notices of their children's cases in Family Court to enable them to appear. This supplements the existing requirement that a summons be issued for an accused juvenile's parent or other person legally responsible. The local probation department that generally interviews parties at the outset for adjustment purposes, as well as the presentment agency (prosecution), would be charged with the responsibility of asking the custodial parent for the necessary contact information for parents other than those already notified. In juvenile delinquency cases, the presentment agency must send the notice, along with a copy of the petition, to the non-custodial parent or parents at least five days before the appearance date. In PINS cases, where there is most often no presentment agency, the Family Court would be charged with sending the notice. Consistent with Family Court Act §§341.2(3) and 741(c), however, the absence of the parent who was sent the notice to appear in court would not be grounds to delay the proceedings.

As in child abuse, child neglect and PINS proceedings, so, too, in juvenile delinquency proceedings the child's non-custodial parent may be a critical participant in the dispositional process. Sometimes a non-custodial parent or his or her extended family may provide vitally-needed placement resources for a child, both temporarily during the pendency of the action and on a more extended basis at disposition. These family members may at the very least provide helpful participation that may positively influence the child's behavior. However, unlike the statutory provisions applicable to child protective and PINS proceedings, the Family Court Act contains no mandate to even notify non-custodial parents of, let alone engage them in resolving, their children's juvenile delinquency proceedings. This proposal would fill that gap.

2. Continuity of counsel: The proposal provides necessary continuity in representation by attorneys for juveniles in both delinquency and PINS cases. Similar to the requirement in Family Court Act §1016 for the appointment of the attorney for the child in a child protective proceeding to continue during the life of a dispositional or post-dispositional order, Family Court Act §§320.2(2) and 741(a) would be amended to continue the appointment of the child's attorney in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings for the entire period of a dispositional order, an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal and any extensions of placement, permanency hearings, violation hearings or other post-dispositional proceedings. As in child protective cases, the appointment would automatically continue unless the Family Court relieves the attorney or grants the attorney's application to be relieved, in which case the Court must appoint another attorney immediately. While the current practice of the attorney submitting a voucher for payment at the close of a proceeding would continue, the attorney would be able, as in child protective proceedings, to submit a separate application for compensation for post-dispositional services rendered.

One of the central precepts underlying the Family Court Act is the necessity of representation of juveniles at every stage of the proceedings, a precept "based on a finding that counsel is often indispensable to a practical realization of due process of law and may be helpful in making reasoned determinations of fact and proper orders of disposition." Family Court Act §241. The Act recognizes that juveniles "often require the assistance of counsel to help protect their interests and to help them express their wishes to the court." *Id.* Both the juvenile delinquency and

PINS statutes explicitly require appointment of an attorney for the youth at the outset of proceedings, require the attorney's personal appearance at every hearing and provide for the continuation of the appointment on appeal. *See* Family Court Act §§307.4(2), 320.2(2), 320.3, 341.2(1), 728(a), 741(a), 1120(b). What is less clear, however, is whether the appointment of the attorney, absent an appeal, continues after the disposition of a juvenile delinquency or PINS proceeding. This proposal eliminates that ambiguity. Representation of juveniles in such cases after disposition in case conferences and subsequent reviews is critically important to efforts to ensure that effective permanency planning takes place. In the juvenile delinquency and PINS context, this representation may significantly further the goal of ensuring that services are in place to facilitate the juvenile's successful reintegration into his or her community.

3. Responsibility of the Family Court at disposition: The proposal requires the Family Court not only to consider, but also to craft, a case-specific order that meets the needs and best interests of the juveniles and, in juvenile delinquency cases, that balances these factors with the need for protection of the community. Analogous to section 1015-a of the Family Court Act, if the Court determines that there are particular services that would facilitate the juveniles' successful return home, the Court would be empowered, as part of a disposition, extension of placement or permanency order, to direct that the appropriate agency arrange for or furnish them and provide the Court and parties with progress reports. As in Family Court Act §1015-a, the scope of these orders with respect to social services officials would be limited by the county child and family services plan then in effect. Where the dispositional order places the juvenile with a county department of social services or, in the case of juvenile delinquents, with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, the dispositional order must contain or have annexed the same elements as child protective placement orders, including a description of the family visitation plan, the service plan if available (or if not yet available, then within 60 days of the disposition) and a directive that notice be given to the parents of any planning conferences. The order must further provide that youth under 21, who do not yet have high school diplomas, must be provided with educational services that comport with the Education Law and regulations so that credits achieved would be transferable and, further, that special education services must be provided if required. The juvenile, his or her attorney and his or her parent or guardian must be given a copy of the order.

4. Permanency planning goals and services for adolescents: As in the child welfare permanency legislation, the proposal would require the Family Court to consider the services necessary to assist juveniles 14 and older, instead of 16 and older, to make the transition from foster care to independent living in juvenile delinquency and PINS cases. *See* Family Court Act §1089(d)(2)(vii)(G). Further, as in the permanency statute, for those juveniles who are neither returning home nor achieving permanence through adoption, the proposal would require that if the permanency planning goal is "another planned permanent living arrangement," it must include "a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child." *See* Family Court Act §1089(d)(2)(i)(E).

Unquestionably, these features of the permanency legislation, most specifically addressing the needs of adolescents in out-of-home care, are equally essential for the adolescents who comprise the juvenile delinquency and PINS caseloads of the Family Courts statewide. Planning for the

juveniles' release to their families, the predominant permanency goal in juvenile delinquency and PINS cases, must begin early and, where their families will not be a resource, the identification of a suitable permanency resource is critically important. As recent reports regarding New York's placement system point out, youth exiting out-of-home care are especially vulnerable and have significant needs that must be met if they are to make a successful adjustment to the community. If they do not receive these supports, the community, not just the juveniles, will suffer.⁶

5. Mental health services for juveniles in out-of-home care: The proposal would amend Family Court Act §§354 and 756 to require that “[r]outine, emergency or other mental health treatment, including administration of psychotropic medication, shall be provided by licensed mental health professionals as authorized by law.” The recent investigation by the United States Department of Justice, as well as the Governor’s Task Force and *Child Welfare Watch* reports, underscore the need for this provision. The Governor’s Task Force Report noted that 48% of delinquent youth screened by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services upon admission are assessed to have mental health needs and estimates from national experts indicate that as many as two-thirds of juveniles in placement facilities nationwide have significant mental needs.⁷ As the Department of Justice findings letter indicated, all too often, professional diagnoses and treatments are not provided and psychotropic medication is not professionally monitored.⁸ The *Child Welfare Watch* report specifically recommended deployment of psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses to youth facilities.⁹

6. Expansion of alternatives to placement: Foremost among the recommendations in the recent reports on New York’s juvenile justice system is the need to reduce the often ineffective and costly placements in favor of increased development and utilization of community-based alternatives.¹⁰ Consistent with these recommendations, the Committee’s proposal would authorize the Family Court to direct that an adjudicated juvenile delinquent or person in need of supervision, who would otherwise be placed, be required to participate in an intensive supervision program for all

⁶ See generally, Governor’s Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, *Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State* (Dec., 2009); Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, *Inside Out: Youth’s Experiences Inside New York State’s Placement System* (Dec., 2009); *A Need for Correction: Reforming New York’s Juvenile Justice System*, 18 *Child Welfare Watch* (Fall, 2009).

⁷ See Governor’s Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, *Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State* (Dec., 2009) at 59, 85 n. 10 [citing S. Moore, “Mentally Ill Offenders Strain Juvenile Justice System,” *NY Times*, Aug. 9, 2009].

⁸ U.S. Dept. of Justice, “Investigation of Lansing Residential Center, Lou Gossett, Jr. Residential Center, Tryon Residential Center and Tryon Girls Center” (Findings Letter, dated Aug. 14, 2009), at pages 6.15 - 6.26.

⁹ *A Need for Correction: Reforming New York’s Juvenile Justice System*, 18 *Child Welfare Watch* (Fall, 2009), at p. 3. See also, Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, *Inside Out: Youth’s Experiences Inside New York State’s Placement System* (Dec., 2009) at p. 5.

¹⁰ See note 6, *supra*.

or part of the period of probation to the extent available in the county. Such a program may require participation in a community-based rehabilitative program, including, among others, the evidence-based programs that have proven successful in many parts of the State. Explicit inclusion of intensive supervision, including community-based programs, effectuates the mandate for both PINS and juvenile delinquency cases that the Family Court direct utilization of the “least restrictive available alternative” and that reasonable efforts be made to prevent placements. *See* Family Court Act §§352.2(2); 754(2)(a).

Further, in an effort to minimize unnecessary extensions of placement in both juvenile delinquency and PINS cases, the proposal would authorize the Family Court, instead of extending or continuing placement, to order that juveniles may be placed on probation for up to one year or that, in juvenile delinquency cases, juveniles may be conditionally discharged. These options may be useful where a local probation department, often in conjunction with a community-based agency, is able to provide aftercare services for a juvenile not available through the placement agency. It is not, however, a mandate for any probation department that does not have or does not elect to provide such services; nor would it relieve placement agencies from their responsibilities to engage the youth and his or her family in release planning early in the placement.

Intensive supervision is a critically-needed dispositional alternative. Enhanced state reimbursement has been available for several years for intensive probation supervision for adults, but far smaller amounts have been afforded to juvenile programs. That use of intensive probation and community programs can be an effective means of addressing juvenile justice cases, while at the same time saving considerable sums of money, has been clearly demonstrated, such as in New York City’s Esperanza and Enhanced Supervision programs and Juvenile Justice Initiative and programs in Erie County.¹¹ Nationally, such programs are recognized as providing cost-effective, safe alternatives to residential placement.¹² The alternative – placement in facilities operated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services or contract agencies – has become increasingly expensive, averaging \$210,000 per juvenile per year in 2009, as compared to \$3743 per child for Enhanced Supervision, \$13,000 for Esperanza and \$17,000 for the Juvenile Justice Initiative.¹³ The enormous investment in out-of-home placement has not paid off; a study of a large sample of youth released from NYS OCFS facilities from 1991 to 1995 revealed that 89% of the boys and 81% of the

¹¹ *See* Governor’s Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, *Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State* (Dec., 2009) at 27; K. Hurley, “Homes for Teens, Not Lock-ups: New York City Experiments with Keeping Lawbreakers in the Community,” in *A Need for Correction: Reforming New York’s Juvenile Justice System*, 18 *Child Welfare Watch* 14, 18, 21 (Fall, 2009); “Alternative to Jail Programs for Juveniles Reduce City Costs,” *Inside the Budget*, #148 (NYC Independent Budget Office; July 11, 2006).

¹² *See generally*, Home-based Services for Serious and Violent Offenders, Center for the Study of Youth Policy (Oct., 1994); M. Jones and B. Krisberg, *Images and Reality: Juvenile Crime, Youth Violence and Public Policy*, National Council on Crime and Delinquency (June, 1994), p. 37; *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Offenders: Program Summary*, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Dec., 1993), p. 21.

¹³ *See* note 11, *supra*.

girls had been rearrested by the time they reached the age of 28, 85% of the boys and 69% of the girls had been convicted and 52% of the boys and 12% of the girls had been incarcerated by that age.¹⁴ Community-based alternatives have demonstrated far lower recidivism.¹⁵

With respect to PINS, the need for this proposal is underscored by the conclusions reached by the Vera Institute of Justice in its two studies that were commissioned by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services in 2001 and 2004.¹⁶ The earlier study characterized detention and placement as the “most expensive” and “least satisfying” pre-dispositional and dispositional options for the juveniles, their families and the system as a whole – options that have not been demonstrated to improve either the truancy or absconding problems that form the gravamen of most PINS petitions and that have drained resources away from more promising solutions –and the follow-up study highlighted the efficacy of the use of creative alternatives to detention and placement for PINS.

Significantly, not only does intensive supervision save money, but it may also facilitate access to Federal dollars. Funds from the Federal child welfare programs can be made available to localities for these programs if the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives and local probation departments work in partnership with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and local social services districts. If intensive supervision services that are provided to youth in order to prevent placement are explicitly included in the statewide plan for child welfare services, Federal reimbursement would be available as a preventive service under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. 42 U.S.C.A. §§622, 623 [Social Security Act, Title IV-B].¹⁷ Federal reimbursement for child welfare services to prevent placement of juvenile delinquents is contemplated, so long as the facilities where the youth would have been placed are eligible for Federal foster care funding – *i.e.*, that the facilities are not secure detention centers or forestry camps or training schools housing over 25 juveniles. 42 U.S.C. §672(c) [Social Security Act, Title IV-E].

With respect to juvenile delinquents, as is now authorized for pretrial detention [Laws of 2008, ch. 57], so, too, the Committee’s proposal authorizes, but does not require, electronic

¹⁴ See Governor’s Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, *Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State* (Dec., 2009) at page 85, n. 5.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Fight Crime, Invest in Kids, *Getting Juvenile Justice Right in New York: Proven Interventions Will Cut Crime and Save Money* (2007).

¹⁶ *Changing the PINS System in New York: A Study of the Implications of Raising the Age Limit for Persons in Need of Supervision* (PINS) (Vera Inst., Sept., 2001) at pages 34, 38; *Changing the Status Quo for Status Offenders: New York State’s Efforts to Support Troubled Teens* (Vera Inst., Dec., 2004).

¹⁷ Reimbursable "child welfare services" are defined as "public social services," directed, *inter alia*, at "preventing or remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in the neglect, abuse, exploitation or delinquency of children." 42 U.S.C. §625(a)(1)(B) [Social Security Act, Title IV-B]. The Federal regulations implementing the Act enumerate counseling and other services determined to be "necessary and appropriate," including "intensive, home-based family services." 45 C.F.R. §1357.15.

monitoring as a dispositional condition of an intensive probation regimen. This would be an adjunct to, but not a replacement for, the in-person contacts so vital to the success of probation, particularly as applied to juveniles. In light of the requirement in section 303.1(a) of the Family Court Act that Criminal Procedure Law provisions be “specifically prescribed” in the Family Court Act in order to be applicable, this provision would provide the necessary analogue to section 65.10(4) of the Criminal Procedure Law, the statutory response to the decision of the Court of Appeals in People v. McNair, 87 N.Y.2d 772 (1996). See Laws of 1996, ch. 653. Enactment of an authorization for electronic monitoring in New York is long overdue. Significantly, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services uses it in its aftercare supervision.¹⁸ Several other states utilize this option as a vital component of a dispositional plan in juvenile delinquency cases¹⁹ and the Appellate Division, Third Department recently endorsed its use as a reasonable condition of probation in a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) proceeding. See Matter of Kristian CC., 24 A.D.3d 930 (3d Dept., 2005), *lve. app. denied*, 6 N.Y.3d 710 (2006).

To ensure quality programs, the proposal requires the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives to promulgate regulations permitting and guiding the operation by local probation departments of both electronic monitoring and intensive supervision programs, addressing such issues as: maximum probation officer caseloads; special training requirements for intensive supervision officers; nature and frequency of the contacts with the juveniles, schools and other agencies; and the level and type of supervision, treatment and other program components. Further, in order to allow adequate time for programs to be developed, the dispositional alternatives would not take effect until the following fiscal year.

7. Educational and vocational release planning in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings: To realize the goals of the release planning and educational services provisions for both PINS and juvenile delinquents and consistent with the recommendation of the Governor’s Task Force,²⁰ the proposal amends section 112 of the Education Law to require the New York State Department of Education to establish and enforce standards to enable educational programs in placement facilities to provide credits to juveniles that are transferable to schools upon their release and that all school districts accept and recognize such credits. The proposal further requires that local school districts enroll youth exiting placement in school within five business days of their release. Consistent with the school stability provisions of the Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Adoption Improvement Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351], school authorities would also be required to ensure that, where appropriate, students may remain in their schools of origin, notwithstanding placement.

¹⁸ See NYS OCFS, *Electronic Monitoring Program* (June, 2002)[www.ocfs.state.ny.us, accessed Jan. 7, 2010].

¹⁹ See, e.g., Ariz. Rev. Stat., Tit. 8, ch. 3, Art. 3, §8-341 (1999); Ark. Stat. Ann. Tit. 9, Subtit. 3, Ch. 27, Subch. 3, §9-27-330 (1997); West’s Fla. Stat. Ann. §985.231 (1999); Official Code of Ga. Ann., Tit. 49, Ch. 4A, §49-4A-13 (1999); Baldwin’s Ohio Rev. Code Ann., Tit. XXI, §2151.355 (1999); Rev. Code Wash., Tit. 13, Ch. 13.40, §13.40.210(3)(b)(1999).

²⁰ Governor’s Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice, *Charting a New Course: A Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State* (Dec., 2009) at pages 62, 77.

It is most ironic that PINS, many, if not most, of whom had been truant or experienced other school difficulties, are the only category of juveniles before the Family Court who do not have specific statutory rights to school and vocational release planning. Therefore, the Committee's proposal conforms the PINS statute to the juvenile delinquency school and vocational release mandates of Chapter 181 of the Laws of 2000 and to Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, which added identical provisions for children in foster care. The proposal requires the agency with which a PINS is placed – the local Department of Social Services or an authorized child care agency operating under contract – to engage in constructive planning for the child's release, including arranging appropriate educational and/or vocational programs, and to report to the Family Court and to the parties on such efforts. Where an extension of placement is not being sought, the proposal requires a report regarding the child's release plan 30 days prior to the conclusion of the placement period. Where the agency is requesting an extension of placement and permanency hearing, the report must be annexed to the petition, which must be filed 60 days prior to the date on which the permanency hearing must be held.

The release plan mandated in the report must delineate the steps that the agency has taken or will be taking to ensure that the juvenile would be enrolled in school promptly after release, that records would be promptly transferred and that special education services, if any, would continue until such time as the new local education agency develops and implements a new Individual Education Plan, as necessary. For a juvenile not subject to the State compulsory education law who affirmatively elects not to continue in school, the agency must describe steps taken or planned to promptly ensure the juvenile's gainful employment or enrollment in a vocational program. In an extension of placement/ permanency hearing, this release plan would be reviewed by the Family Court in conjunction with its review of the permanency plan and the Court's order would include a determination of the adequacy of the release plan and would specify any necessary modifications. Recognizing that, of all children in out-of-home care, PINS children are among the most likely to have serious educational deficits and needs, these provisions would help to ameliorate the serious, pervasive deficiencies in agency referrals of youth to school and vocational programs upon release from foster care.²¹

The importance of increasing efforts to ensure that both juvenile delinquents and PINS are able to stay in, re-enroll in and succeed in school cannot be overstated. High school drop-outs are 3 ½ times as likely to be arrested as high school graduates and more than eight times more likely to be incarcerated in jails or prisons and even a 10% increase in graduation rates has been estimated to

²¹ *Educational Neglect: The Delivery of Educational Services to Children in New York City's Foster Care System* (Advocates for Children of New York, July, 2000); *Changing the PINS System in New York: A Study of the Implications of Raising the Age Limit for Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS)*, p. 34 (Vera Inst., Sept., 2001); *Changing the Status Quo for Status Offenders: New York State's Efforts to Support Troubled Teens* (Vera Inst., Dec., 2004).

prevent approximately 180 murders and 9000 aggravated assaults in New York annually.²²

8. Placement and permanency hearing orders: Both the Federal *Adoption and Safe Families Act* [Public Law 105-89] and the *Fostering Connections to Success and Adoption Improvement Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351] significantly augment the responsibilities of the Family Court to monitor and shape the placements of youth in out-of-home care, including juvenile delinquents, since New York State receives Federal foster care reimbursement under Title IV-E of the *Social Security Act* for such youth when they are originally placed in or are “stepped down to” non-secure facilities housing 25 children or fewer or to foster homes. Thus, the Committee’s proposal requires permanency hearings for juveniles placed with local Departments of Social Services and with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for limited secure and non-secure facilities. Although New York State does not receive Federal Title IV-E foster care reimbursement for youth in limited secure facilities, these youth may well, during the course of placement, be transferred into IV-E- eligible non-secure facilities. Convening permanency hearings for such youth, which is largely already the practice statewide but should be made uniform, greatly facilitates the planning process and assures compliance with the Federally-required time-limits applicable once the youth are transferred. *See, e.g., Matter of Donovan Z.*, 6 Misc.3d 1023(A), 800 N.Y.S.2d 345, 2005 N.Y. Slip Op. 50160 (Fam. Ct., Monroe Co., 2005)(Unreported opinion).

Further, as in the child welfare permanency legislation, the proposal requires that permanency hearing orders in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings include: a description of the visiting plan between the juvenile and his or her parent or legally-responsible adult; a service plan designed to fulfill the permanency goal for the juvenile;²³ a direction that the parent or other person legally responsible be notified of, and be invited to be present at, any planning conferences convened by the placement agency with respect to the child; and a warning that if the juvenile remains in placement for 15 out of 22 months, the agency may be required to file a petition to terminate parental rights. A copy of the court order and service plan must be provided to the juvenile, his or her attorney and the juvenile’s parent or other legally responsible individual. *Cf.*, Family Court Act §§1089(d)(2)(vii)(A), 1089(e).

State and Federal law and regulations are unequivocal in their requirements that juvenile delinquency and PINS cases conform to the Federal *Adoption and Safe Families Act* [“*ASFA*,” Public Law 105-89]. The reauthorization of the Federal *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act* [Public Law 107-273] in 2002 made compliance with *ASFA* a requirement, not only for New York State to receive Federal foster care assistance pursuant to Title IV-E of the *Social Security Act* [42 U.S.C.], but also for eligibility for Federal juvenile justice funding from the

²² *See* Fight Crime, Invest in Kids, *Getting Juvenile Justice Right in New York: Proven Interventions Will Cut Crime and Save Money* (2007) at pages 4,6.

²³ If a service plan has not been prepared by the date of disposition, it must be disseminated to the Family Court, presentment agency, child’s attorney and parent or person legally responsible for the child’s care within 60 days of the issuance of the dispositional order.

Department of Justice. The enactment of amendments in 2000 to New York State legislation implementing the Federal *ASFA* underscored the Legislature's recognition that the reasonable efforts, permanency planning and permanency hearing requirements of *ASFA* are fully applicable to juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings in Family Court and are critical aspects of the State's compliance with Federal foster care [*Social Security Act*, 42 U.S.C. Title IV-E] funding mandates. See Laws of 2000, ch. 145; Senate Memorandum in Support of S 7892-a.²⁴ That these amendments were compelled by Federal law is evident from the regulations promulgated on January 25, 2000 by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. 45 *C.F.R.* Parts 1355-1357; 65 *Fed.Reg.* 4019-4093 (Jan. 25, 2000).

The Committee's proposal is vital to address the current conundrum faced by the Family Court: the Court is charged with the responsibility to conduct permanency hearings, monitor permanency planning and issue fact-specific permanency orders in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings, but it is not given the information or authority it requires to discharge that responsibility. If the Family Court and all parties are provided with specific service plans, if needed services are ordered, if representation by the juveniles' attorneys is continued without interruption and if the agencies' responsibilities to work with, and provide appropriate visitation to, the juveniles' parents and other legally responsible adults are clearly articulated, the likelihood of successful permanency planning is significantly increased. This would benefit not only New York State in its efforts to demonstrate compliance with *ASFA*, but also the juveniles, their families and the communities to which the juveniles return. The importance of these provisions is underscored as well in the nationally recognized guidelines approved by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.²⁵ As one child welfare expert has written:²⁶

If *ASFA* and Title IV-E are applied properly, consistently and with a view toward reunification, rehabilitation and safe permanent homes for the children involved, the results can be extraordinary. One outcome – collaboration among courts, agencies, and lawyers – can result in fewer delinquency, status offender, and dependency [child abuse and neglect] cases; more youths and families involved with one another and their communities; and fewer future adult crimes. Collaboration also is efficient under a cost-

²⁴ The 2000 amendments require case-specific, rather than categorical, exclusions of juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings from the mandate to file termination of parental rights proceedings for juveniles who have been in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. Particularized findings must be made at the earliest pre-trial detention hearings regarding whether reasonable efforts had been made to prevent detention or facilitate return home and whether detention is in the child's best interests. Significantly, the amendments clarify that permanency hearings must be held in juvenile delinquency proceedings within 30 days of a finding that reasonable efforts are not required or, if no such finding has been made, no later than 12 months after the child entered foster care and every 12 months thereafter. *Id.* McKinney's 2000 Session Laws of New York, Ch. 145.

²⁵ *Juvenile Delinquency Guidelines: Improving Court Practice in Juvenile Delinquency Cases* (National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, March, 2005).

²⁶ V. Hemrich, "Applying *ASFA* to Delinquency and Status Offender Cases," 18 *ABA Child Law Practice* 9:129, 134 Nov., 1999).

benefit analysis since it provides extra funding for juvenile justice initiatives and preventive services.

ASFA and Title IV-E can be important tools to reform the juvenile justice field. They can provide juvenile justice agencies with added means to control and oversee youths, work preventively with families at risk, and get community involvement and “buy-in.”

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, the education law and the executive law, in relation to services, dispositional alternatives and permanency planning in juvenile delinquency and persons in need of supervision proceedings in family court

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 312.1 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision 4 to read as follows:

4. Upon the filing of a petition under this article, the presentment agency shall notify any non-custodial parents of the respondent who had not been issued a summons in accordance with subdivision one of this section, provided that the addresses of any such parents have been provided. The probation department and presentment agency shall ask the custodial parent or person legally responsible for information regarding any other parent or parents of the respondent. The notice shall inform the parent or parents of the right to appear and participate in the proceeding and to seek temporary release or, upon disposition, direct placement, of the respondent. The presentment agency shall send the notice to the non-custodial parent at least five days before the return date. The failure of a parent entitled to notice to appear shall not be cause for delay of the respondent’s initial appearance, as defined by section 320.1 of this article.

§2. Subdivision 2 of section 320.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

2. At the initial appearance the court must appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent the respondent pursuant to the provisions of section two hundred forty-nine of this act if independent

legal representation is not available to such respondent. Whenever an attorney has been appointed by the family court to represent a child in a proceeding under this article, such appointment shall continue without further court order or appointment during the period covered by any order of disposition issued by the court, an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, or any extension or violation thereof, or during any permanency hearing, other post-dispositional proceeding or appeal. All notices and reports required by law shall be provided to such attorney. Such appointment shall continue unless another appointment of an attorney has been made by the court or unless such attorney makes application to the court to be relieved of his or her appointment. Upon approval of such application to be relieved, the court shall immediately appoint another attorney to whom all notices and reports required by law shall be provided. The attorney for the respondent shall be entitled to compensation pursuant to applicable provisions of law for services rendered up to and including disposition of the petition. The attorney shall, by separate application, be entitled to compensation for services rendered after the disposition of the petition. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the court to remove an attorney from his or her assignment.

§3. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subdivision 2 of section 352.2 of the family court act, paragraph (a) as amended by chapter 880 of the laws of 1985 and paragraph (b) as amended by chapter 145 of the laws of 2000, are amended to read as follows:

(a) In determining an appropriate order, the court shall consider and direct a disposition that specifically meets the needs and best interests of the respondent as well as the need for protection of the community. If the respondent has committed a designated felony act, the court shall determine the appropriate disposition in accord with section 353.5. In all other cases, the court shall order the least restrictive available alternative enumerated in subdivision one which is consistent with the needs and best interests of the respondent and the need for protection of the community. Where appropriate, the court shall include in its order a direction for a local social services, mental health or probation official or an official of the office of children and family services or office of mental health, as applicable, to provide or arrange for the provision of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family to further the goals of this section. Such order regarding a local social services official shall not include the provision of any service or assistance to the respondent and his or her family that is not authorized or required to be made available pursuant to the county child and family services plan then in effect. In any order issued pursuant to this section, the court

may require the official to make periodic progress reports to the court on the implementation of such order. Violation of such order shall be subject to punishment pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-three of the judiciary law.

(b) In an order of disposition entered pursuant to section 353.3 or 353.4 of this chapter, or where the court has determined pursuant to section 353.5 of this chapter that restrictive placement is not required, which order places the respondent with the commissioner of social services or with the office of children and family services for placement with an authorized agency or class of authorized agencies or in such facilities designated by the office of children and family services as are eligible for federal reimbursement pursuant to title IV-E of the social security act, the court in its order shall determine (i) that continuation in the respondent's home would be contrary to the best interests of the respondent; or in the case of a respondent for whom the court has determined that continuation in his or her home would not be contrary to the best interests of the respondent, that continuation in the respondent's home would be contrary to the need for protection of the community; (ii) that where appropriate, and where consistent with the need for protection of the community, reasonable efforts were made prior to the date of the dispositional hearing to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the respondent from his or her home, or if the [child] respondent was removed from his or her home prior to the dispositional hearing, where appropriate and where consistent with the need for safety of the community, whether reasonable efforts were made to make it possible for the [child] respondent to safely return home. If the court determines that reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the [child] respondent from the home were not made but that the lack of such efforts was appropriate under the circumstances, or consistent with the need for protection of the community, or both, the court order shall include such a finding; and (iii) in the case of a [child] respondent who has attained the age of [sixteen] fourteen, the services needed, if any, to assist the [child] respondent to make the transition from foster care to independent living. Where the court determines that reasonable efforts in the form of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family would make it possible for the respondent to safely return home or to make the transition to independent living, the court may include in its order a direction for such services or assistance in accordance with paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

§4. Paragraphs (e) and (f) of subdivision 3 of section 353.2 of the family court act are re-lettered paragraphs (f) and (g) and a new paragraph (e) is added to such subdivision to read as follows:

(e) cooperate with a program of intensive supervision by the probation department during the period of probation or a specified portion thereof, to the extent available in the county, upon a finding on the record by the court that, absent cooperation with such a program, placement of the respondent would be necessary. Such a program shall be conducted in accordance with regulations to be promulgated by the division of probation and correctional alternatives and may require the respondent, among other conditions, to comply with a community-based rehabilitative program and/or a program of electronic monitoring to the extent available in the county, as provided by subdivision one of section two hundred forty-three of the executive law;

§5. Subdivision 6 of section 353.2 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

6. The maximum period of probation shall not exceed two years, which may include intensive supervision, in accordance with paragraph (e) of subdivision three of this section, to the extent available up to the term of probation. If the court finds at the conclusion of the original period and after a hearing that exceptional circumstances require an additional year of probation, the court may continue the probation for an additional year.

§6. Section 353.3 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision 4-a to read as follows:

4-a. Where the respondent is placed with a commissioner of social services or the office of children and family services pursuant to this section, the dispositional order or an attachment to the order incorporated by reference into the order shall include:

(a) a description of the plan to facilitate visitation between the respondent and his or her family;

(b) a service plan, if available. If the service plan has not yet been developed, then the service plan must be filed with the court and delivered to the presentment agency, attorney for the respondent and parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the care of the respondent no later than sixty days from the date the disposition was made; and

(c) a direction that the parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the respondent shall be notified of any planning conferences to be held pursuant to subdivision three of section four hundred nine-e of the social services law, of their right to attend the conferences, and

of their right to have counsel or another representative or companion with them.

The order shall provide that any respondent under twenty-one years of age, who has not received a high school diploma, be provided with educational services, including special educational services, if applicable, in accordance with the education law and regulations promulgated by the commissioner of education in order that any credits accrued shall be transferable to any school to which the respondent is transferred following the placement.

A copy of the court's order and attachments shall be given to the parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the care of the respondent. The order shall also contain a notice that if the respondent remains in placement for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months, the agency with which the child is placed may be required by law to file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the parent or parents of the respondent.

§7. Subdivisions 2 and 4 of section 355.3 of the family court act, subdivision 2 as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982 and subdivision 4 as amended by chapter 454 of the laws of 1995, are amended to read as follows:

2. The court shall conduct a hearing concerning the need for continuing the placement. The respondent, the presentment agency and the agency with [whom] which the respondent has been placed shall be notified of such hearing and shall have the opportunity to be heard [thereat]. If the petition is filed within sixty days prior to the expiration of the period of placement, the court shall first determine at such hearing whether good cause has been shown. If good cause is not shown, the court shall dismiss the petition.

4. At the conclusion of the hearing, the court may, in its discretion, order an extension of the placement for not more than one year, which may include a period of post-release supervision and aftercare, or that the respondent be placed on probation for not more than one year, pursuant to section 353.2 of this part, or that the respondent be conditionally discharged for not more than one year, pursuant to section 353.1 of this part, or may order that the petition for an extension of placement be dismissed, . The court must consider and determine in its order:

(i) that where appropriate, and where consistent with the need for the protection of the community, reasonable efforts were made to make it possible for the respondent to safely return to his or her home;

(ii) in the case of a respondent who has attained the age of [sixteen] fourteen, the services needed, if any, to assist the child to make the transition from foster care to independent living; and

(iii) in the case of a child placed outside New York state, whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the child.

Where the court determines that reasonable efforts in the form of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family would further the respondent's needs and best interests and the need for protection of the community and would make it possible for the respondent to safely return home or to make the transition to independent living, the court may include in its order a direction for such services or assistance in accordance with paragraph (a) of subdivision two of section 352.2 of this part. Where the hearing on the extension of placement has been held in conjunction with a permanency hearing, pursuant to subdivision two of section 355.5 of this part, the court order shall include the requirements of subdivision seven of such section.

§8. Subdivision 3 of section 355.4 of the family court act is amended to read as follows:

3. Subject to regulations of the department of health, routine medical, dental and mental health services and treatment is defined for the purposes of this section to mean any routine diagnosis or treatment, including without limitation the administration of medications or nutrition, the extraction of bodily fluids for analysis, and dental care performed with a local anesthetic. Routine mental health treatment shall not include [psychiatric] administration of psychotropic medication unless it is part of an ongoing mental health plan or unless it is otherwise authorized by law. Routine, emergency or other mental health treatment, including administration of psychotropic medication, shall be provided by licensed mental health professionals as authorized by law.

§9. The opening paragraph of subdivision 2, the opening paragraph of subdivision 3, subdivision 5, subdivision 6 and paragraphs (b) and (d) of subdivision 7 of section 355.5 of the family court act, the opening paragraph of subdivision 2 and the opening paragraph of subdivision 3 as amended by chapter 145 of the laws of 2000, subdivision 5 and paragraph (b) of subdivision 7 as added by chapter 7 of the laws of 1999, subdivision 6 as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 327 of the laws of 2007, and paragraph (d) of subdivision 7 as amended by chapter 181 of the laws of 2000, are amended and a new subdivision 10 is added to such section to read as follows:

2. Where a respondent is placed with a commissioner of social services or the office of children

and family services pursuant to section 353.3 of this [article] part for a period of twelve or fewer months and resides in a foster home or in a non-secure or limited secure facility:

3. Where a respondent is placed with a commissioner of social services or the office of children and family services pursuant to section 353.3 of this [article] part for a period in excess of twelve months and resides in a foster home or in a non-secure or limited secure facility:

5. A petition for an initial or subsequent permanency hearing shall be filed by the office of children and family services or by the commissioner of social services with whom the respondent was placed. Such petition shall be filed no later than sixty days prior to the end of the month in which an initial or subsequent permanency hearing must be held, as directed in subdivision two of this section. The petition shall be accompanied by a permanency report that conforms to the requirements of subdivision (c) of section one thousand eighty-nine of this act.

6. The respondent and his or her attorney shall be notified of the hearing and of the respondent's right to be heard and a copy of the permanency petition and accompanying report filed in accordance with subdivision 5 of this section shall be served on the respondent's attorney. The foster parent caring for the respondent or any pre-adoptive parent or relative providing care for the respondent shall be provided with notice of any permanency hearing held pursuant to this section by the office of children and family services or the commissioner of social services with whom the respondent was placed. Such foster parent, pre-adoptive parent and relative shall have the right to be heard at any such hearing; provided, however, no such foster parent, pre-adoptive parent or relative shall be construed to be a party to the hearing solely on the basis of such notice and right to be heard. The failure of the foster parent, pre-adoptive parent, or relative caring for the [child] respondent to appear at a permanency hearing shall constitute a waiver of the right to be heard and such failure to appear shall not cause a delay of the permanency hearing nor shall such failure to appear be a ground for the invalidation of any order issued by the court pursuant to this section.

(b). In the case of a respondent who has attained the age of [sixteen] fourteen, the services needed, if any, to assist the respondent to make the transition from foster care to independent living;

(d) with regard to the completion of placement ordered by the court pursuant to section 353.3 or 355.3 of this [article] part: whether and when the respondent: (i) will be returned to the parent or parents; (ii) should be placed for adoption with the local commissioner of social services filing a petition for termination of parental rights; (iii) should be referred for legal guardianship; (iv) should

be placed permanently with a fit and willing relative; or (v) should be placed in another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child if the office of children and family services or the local commissioner of social services has documented to the court a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interest of the respondent to return home, be referred for termination of parental rights and placed for adoption, placed with a fit and willing relative, or placed with a legal guardian; and

10. If the order resulting from the permanency hearing extends the respondent's placement pursuant to section 355.3 of this part in a foster home or non-secure or limited secure facility or if the respondent continues in such placement under a prior order of placement or an extension thereof, the order or an attachment to the order incorporated into the order by reference shall include:

(a) a description of the plan to facilitate visitation between the respondent and his or her family;

(b) a service plan aimed at effectuating the permanency goal; and

(c) a direction that the parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the respondent shall be notified of any planning conferences, including those held pursuant to subdivision three of section four hundred nine-e of the social services law, of their right to attend the conferences, and their right to have counsel or another representative or companion with them.

Where the court determines that reasonable efforts in the form of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family would further the respondent's needs and best interests and the need for protection of the community and would make it possible for the respondent to safely return home or to make the transition to independent living, the court may include in its order a direction for such services or assistance in accordance with paragraph (a) of subdivision two of section 352.2 of this part.

A copy of the court's order and the attachments shall be given to the respondent and his or her attorney and to the respondent's parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the respondent. The order shall also contain a notice that if the respondent remains in foster care for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months, the agency with which the respondent is placed may be required by law to file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the parent or parents of the respondent.

§10. Section 736 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision 4 to read as follows:

(4) In any proceeding under this article, the court shall cause a copy of the petition and notice of the time and place to be heard to be served upon any non-custodial parent of the child, provided that the address of such parent is known to or is ascertainable by the court. Service shall be made by ordinary first class mail at such parent' s last known residence. The failure of such parent to appear shall not be cause for delay of the proceedings.

§11. Subdivision (a) of section 741 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 837 of the laws of 1975, is amended and a new subdivision (d) is added to such section to read as follows:

(a) At the initial appearance of a respondent in a proceeding and at the commencement of any hearing under this article, the respondent and his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care shall be advised of the respondent's right to remain silent and of his or her right to be represented by counsel chosen by him or her or his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care, or by [a law guardian] an attorney assigned by the court under part four of article two. [Provided, however, that in] In the event of the failure of the respondent's parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care to appear, after reasonable and substantial effort has been made to notify such parent or responsible person of the commencement of the proceeding and such initial appearance, the court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney for the respondent and shall, unless inappropriate, also appoint a guardian ad litem for such respondent, and in such event, shall inform the respondent of such rights in the presence of such [law guardian] attorney and any guardian ad litem.

(d) Whenever an attorney has been appointed by the family court to represent a respondent in a proceeding under this article pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section, such appointment shall continue without further court order or appointment during an order of disposition issued by the court, an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, or any extension or violation thereof, or any permanency hearing, other post-dispositional proceeding or appeal. All notices and reports required by law shall be provided to such attorney. Such appointment shall continue unless another appointment of an attorney has been made by the court or unless such attorney makes application to the court to be relieved of his or her appointment. Upon approval of such application to be relieved, the court shall immediately appoint another attorney to whom all notices and reports required by law

shall be provided. The attorney shall be entitled to compensation pursuant to applicable provisions of law for services rendered up to and including disposition of the petition. The attorney shall, by separate application, be entitled to compensation for services rendered after the disposition of the petition. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the court to remove an attorney from his or her assignment.

§12. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 2 of section 754 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 7 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

(a) In determining an appropriate order, the court shall consider and direct a disposition that specifically meets the needs and best interests of the respondent The order shall state the court's reasons for the particular disposition. If the court places the [child] respondent in accordance with section seven hundred fifty-six of this part, the court in its order shall determine: (i) whether continuation in the [child's] respondent's home would be contrary to the respondent's best interest [of the child] and where appropriate, that reasonable efforts were made prior to the date of the dispositional hearing held pursuant to this article to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the [child] respondent from his or her home and, if the [child] respondent was removed from his or her home prior to the date of such hearing, that such removal was in the [child's] respondent's best interest and, where appropriate, reasonable efforts were made to make it possible for the [child] respondent to return safely home. If the court determines that reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the [child] respondent from the home were not made but that the lack of such efforts was appropriate under the circumstances, the court order shall include such a finding; and (ii) in the case of a [child] respondent who has attained the age of [sixteen] fourteen, the services needed, if any, to assist the [child] respondent to make the transition from foster care to independent living. Where appropriate, including, but not limited to, where the court determines that reasonable efforts in the form of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family would make it possible for the respondent to safely return home or to make the transition to independent living, the court shall include in its order a direction for a local social services, mental health or probation official, as applicable, to provide or arrange for the provision of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family to further the goals of this section. Such order regarding a local social services official shall not include the provision of any service or assistance to the respondent and his or her family that is not authorized or required to be made available pursuant to the county

child and family services program plan then in effect. In any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the official to make periodic progress reports to the court on the implementation of such order. Violation of such order shall be subject to punishment pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-three of the judiciary law. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to modify the standards for directing detention set forth in section seven hundred thirty-nine of this article.

§13. Subdivision (a) of section 756 of the family court act is amended by adding new paragraphs (iii) and (iv) to such subdivision to read as follows:

(iii) The local commissioner of social services or the person with whom the respondent has been placed under this section shall submit a report to the court, the attorney for the respondent and the presentment agency, if any, not later than thirty days prior to the conclusion of the placement period; provided, however, that where the local commissioner of social services or person with whom the respondent has been placed files a petition for an extension of the placement and a permanency hearing pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-six-a of this part, such report shall be submitted not later than sixty days prior to the date on which the permanency hearing must be held and shall be annexed to the petition.

(iv) The permanency hearing report submitted in accordance with paragraph (iii) of this subdivision shall conform to the requirements of subdivision (c) of section one thousand eighty-nine of this act and shall contain recommendations and such supporting data as is appropriate. The permanency hearing report, as well as the report submitted not later than thirty days prior to the conclusion of the placement, shall include, but not limited to, a plan for the release of the respondent to the custody of his or her parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the respondent's care, or to another permanency alternative as provided in paragraph (iv) of subdivision (d) of section seven hundred fifty-six-a of this part. The release plan shall provide as follows:

(1) If the respondent is subject to article sixty-five of the education law or elects to participate in an educational program leading to a high school diploma following release, such plan shall include, but not be limited to, the steps that the agency with which the respondent is placed has taken and will be taking in conjunction with the local education agency to ensure the immediate enrollment of the respondent in an appropriate school or educational program leading to a high school diploma and the transfer of necessary records in advance of or immediately upon release or, if

such release occurs during the summer recess, immediately upon the commencement of the next school term.

(2) If the agency has reason to believe that the respondent may have a disability or if the respondent had been found eligible to receive special education services prior to or during the placement, in accordance with article eighty-nine of the education law, such plan shall include, but not be limited to, the steps that the agency with which the respondent is placed has taken and will be taking to ensure that the local education agency makes any necessary referrals or arranges for special educational evaluations or services, as appropriate, and provides necessary records immediately in accordance with state and federal law.

(3) If the respondent is not subject to article sixty-five of the education law and elects not to participate in an educational program leading to a high school diploma, such plan shall include, but not be limited to, the steps that the agency with which the respondent is placed has taken and will be taking to assist the respondent to become gainfully employed or enrolled in a vocational program immediately upon release.

§14. Section 756 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (d) to such section to read as follows:

(d) Where the respondent is placed pursuant to this section, the dispositional order or an attachment to the order incorporated by reference into the order shall include:

(i) a description of the visitation plan, including any plans for visits and/or contact with the respondent's siblings;

(ii) a service plan, if available. If the service plan has not yet been developed, then the service plan must be filed with the court and delivered to the presentment agency, attorney for the respondent and parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the care of the respondent no later than ninety days from the date the disposition was made; and

(iii) a direction that the parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for care of the respondent shall be notified of any planning conferences to be held pursuant to subdivision three of section four hundred nine-e of the social services law, of their right to attend the conferences, and of their right to have counsel or another representative or companion with them.

The order shall provide that any respondent under the age of twenty-one be provided with

educational services, including special educational services, if applicable, in accordance with the education law and regulations promulgated by the commissioner of education in order that any credits accrued shall be transferable to any school to which the respondent is transferred following the placement. The order shall further provide that any routine, emergency or other mental health treatment, including administration of psychotropic medication, if any, shall be provided by licensed mental health professionals as authorized by law.

A copy of the court's order and attachments shall be given to the respondent and his or her attorney and to the respondent's parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the care of the respondent. The order shall also contain a notice that if the respondent remains in placement for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months, the agency with which the respondent is placed may be required by law to file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the parent or parents of the respondent.

§15. Subdivision (a), subdivision (b) and the opening paragraph and paragraphs (ii), (iii) and (iv) of subdivision (d) of section 756-a of the family court act, subdivision (a) as amended by section 30 of chapter 309 of the laws of 1996, subdivision (b) and the opening paragraph and paragraphs (ii), (iii) and (iv) of subdivision (d) as amended by section 4 of part B of chapter 327 of the laws of 2007, are amended and a new paragraph (v) is added to such section to read as follows:

(a) In any case in which the [child] respondent has been placed pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-six, the [child] respondent, the person with whom the [child] respondent has been placed or the commissioner of social services may petition the court to extend such placement. Such petition shall be filed at least sixty days prior to the expiration of the period of placement, except for good cause shown, but in no event shall such petition be filed after the original expiration date. The petition shall be accompanied by a permanency report that conforms to the requirements of paragraph (iii) of subdivision (a) of section seven hundred fifty-six of this part.

(b) The court shall conduct a permanency hearing concerning the need for continuing the placement. The [child] respondent, the person with whom the [child] respondent has been placed and the commissioner of social services shall be notified of such hearing and shall have the right to be heard thereat. A copy of the petition and accompanying permanency report shall be served on the respondent's attorney.

(d) At the conclusion of the hearing, the court may, in its discretion, order an extension of the

placement for not more than one year, which may include a period of post-release supervision and aftercare, or that the respondent be placed on probation for not more than one year, pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-seven of this part, or may order that the petition for an extension of placement be dismissed.. The court must consider and determine in its order:

(ii) In the case of a [child] respondent who has attained the age of [sixteen] fourteen, the services needed, if any, to assist the respondent to make the transition from foster care to independent living;

(iii) in the case of a [child] respondent placed outside New York state, whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interests of the [child] respondent; [and]

(iv) whether and when the [child] respondent: (A) will be returned to the parent; (B) should be placed for adoption with the social services official filing a petition for termination of parental rights; (C) should be referred for legal guardianship; (D) should be placed permanently with a fit and willing relative; or (E) should be placed in another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the respondent if the social services official has documented to the court a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interest of the [child] respondent to return home, be referred for termination of parental rights and placed for adoption, placed with a fit and willing relative, or placed with a legal guardian; and where the [child] respondent will not be returned home, consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements; and

(v) with regard to the completion or extension of placement ordered by the court pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-six of this part, the steps that must be taken by the agency with which the respondent is placed to implement the plan for release submitted pursuant to paragraphs (iii) and (iv) of subdivision (a) of such section, the adequacy of such plan and any modifications that should be made to such plan.

§16. Subdivisions (e) and (f) of section 756-a of the family court act are re-lettered subdivisions (f) and (g) and a new subdivision (e) is added to such section to read as follows:

(e) If the order from the permanency hearing extends the respondent's placement or if the respondent continues in placement under a prior order, the order or an attachment to the order incorporated into the order by reference shall include:

(i) a description of the visitation plan, including any plans for visitation and/or contact with the respondent's siblings;

(ii) a service plan aimed at effectuating the permanency goal; and

(iii) a direction that the parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the care of the respondent shall be notified of any planning conferences to be held pursuant to subdivision three of section four hundred nine-e of the social services law, of their right to attend the conferences and of their right to have counsel or another representative or companion with them.

The order shall provide that any respondent under the age of twenty-one years be provided with educational services, including special educational services, if applicable, in accordance with the education law and regulations promulgated by the commissioner of education in order that any credits accrued shall be transferable to any school to which the respondent is transferred following the placement. The order shall further provide that any routine, emergency or other mental health treatment, including administration of psychotropic medication, if any, shall be provided by licensed mental health professionals as authorized by law.

Where appropriate, including, but not limited to, where the court determines that reasonable efforts in the form of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family would make it possible for the respondent to safely return home or to make the transition to independent living, the court shall include in its order a direction for a local social services, mental health or probation official, as applicable, to provide or arrange for the provision of services or assistance to the respondent and his or her family to further the goals of this section. Such order regarding a local social services official shall not include the provision of any service or assistance to the respondent and his or her family that is not authorized or required to be made available pursuant to the county child and family services plan then in effect. In any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the official to make periodic progress reports to the court on the implementation of such order. Violation of such order shall be subject to punishment pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-three of the judiciary law.

A copy of the court's order and the service plan shall be given to the respondent and his or her attorney and to the respondent's parent or parents or other person or persons legally responsible for the care of the respondent. The order shall also contain a notice that if the respondent remains in foster care for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months, the agency may be required by law to

file a petition to terminate the parental rights of the parent or parents of the respondent.

§ 17. Subdivision (b) of section 757 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended and a new subdivision (e) is added to such section to read as follows:

(b) The maximum period of probation shall not exceed one year, which may include intensive supervision, in accordance with subdivision (e) of this section, to the extent available, during all or part of the term of probation. If the court finds at the conclusion of the original period that exceptional circumstances require an additional year of probation, the court may continue probation for an additional year.

(e) If the respondent has been found to be a person in need of supervision, and if the court further finds that, absent intensive supervision, the respondent would be placed pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-six of this part, the court may direct the respondent to cooperate with a program of intensive supervision, which may include compliance with a community-based rehabilitative program, during all or part of the term of probation. The local probation department may provide intensive supervision to respondents so directed pursuant to this subdivision in accordance with regulations to be promulgated by the state division of probation and correctional alternatives pursuant to subdivision one of section two hundred forty-three of the executive law.

§18. Subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 112 of the education law, as amended by section 62 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

1. The department shall establish and enforce standards of instruction, personnel qualifications and other requirements for education services or programs, as determined by rules of the regents and regulations of the commissioner, with respect to the individual requirements of children who are in full-time residential care in facilities or homes operated or supervised by any state department or agency or political subdivision and shall require that credits accrued by children in programs that conform to such standards shall be transferable to any school to which the respondent is transferred following the residential care. The department shall cooperate with the office of children and family services, the department of mental hygiene and local departments of social services with respect to educational and vocational training programs for children placed with, committed to or under the supervision of such agencies. The department shall promulgate regulations requiring the cooperation of local school districts in facilitating the [prompt] enrollment

within no more than five business days of children who are released or conditionally released from residential facilities operated by or under contract with the office of children and family services, the department of mental hygiene and local departments of social services and in implementing plans for release or conditional release submitted to the family court pursuant to paragraph (c) of subdivision seven of section 353.3 and paragraphs (iii) and (iv) of subdivision (a) of section seven hundred fifty-six of the family court act and the educational components of permanency hearing reports submitted pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of the family court act. Such regulations regarding the educational components of permanency hearing reports submitted pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of the family court act shall be developed in conjunction with the office of children and family services. Such regulations shall facilitate the retention of children placed or remanded into foster care in their original schools and, if that is not feasible or determined to be in the child's best interests, the immediate enrollment of the children in school and transfer of necessary records. Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to apply to responsibility for the provision or payment of care, maintenance or other services subject to the provisions of the executive law, mental hygiene law, social services law or any other law.

2. The commissioner shall prepare a report and submit it to the governor, the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate by December thirty-first, nineteen hundred ninety-six and on December thirty-first of each successive year. Such report shall contain, for each facility operated by or under contract with the office of children and family services that provides educational programs, an assessment of each facility's compliance with the rules of the board of regents, the regulations of the commissioner, and this chapter. Such report shall include, but not be limited to: the number of youth receiving services under article eighty-nine of this chapter; the office's activities undertaken as required by subdivisions one, two, four and eight of section forty-four hundred three of this chapter; the number of youth receiving bilingual education services; the number of youth eligible to receive limited English proficient services; interviews with facility residents conducted during site visits; library services; the ratio of teachers to students; the curriculum; the length of stay of each youth and the number of hours of instruction provided; instructional technology utilized; the educational services provided following the release and conditional release of the youth, including, but not limited to, the implementation of requirements for the prompt enrollment of such youth in school contained in plans for release and conditional release submitted to the family court pursuant to paragraph (c) of subdivision seven of section 353.3 and

paragraphs (iii) and (iv) of subdivision (a) of section seven hundred fifty-six of the family court act and in the education components of permanency hearing reports submitted pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of the family court act and the compliance by local school districts with the regulations promulgated pursuant to subdivision one of this section; and any recommendations to ensure compliance with the rules of regents, regulations of the commissioner, and this chapter.

§19. The opening paragraph of subdivision 1 of section 409-e of the social services law, as amended by section 60 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

1. With respect to each child who is identified by a local social services district as being considered for placement in foster care as defined in section one thousand eighty-seven of the family court act by a social services district, such district, within thirty days from the date of such identification, shall perform an assessment of the child and his or her family circumstances. Where a child has been removed from his or her home and placed into foster care as defined in section one thousand eighty-seven of the family court act, detention or placement pursuant to article seven of the family court act or nonsecure or limited secure placement pursuant to article three of the family court act, within thirty days of such removal, detention or placement, the local social services district shall perform an assessment of the child and his or her family circumstances, or update any assessment performed when the child was considered for placement. Any assessment shall be in accordance with such uniform procedures and criteria as the office of children and family services shall by regulation prescribe. Such assessment shall include the following:

§20. Subdivision 1 of section 243 of the executive law, as amended by chapter 134 of the laws of 1985, is amended to read as follows:

1. The director shall exercise general supervision over the administration of probation services throughout the state, including probation in family courts and shall collect statistical and other information and make recommendations regarding the administration of probation services in the courts. He or she shall endeavor to secure the effective application of the probation system and the enforcement of the probation laws and the laws relating to family courts throughout the state. After consultation with the state probation commission, he or she shall adopt general rules which shall regulate methods and procedure in the administration of probation services, including investigation of defendants prior to sentence, and children prior to adjudication, supervision, case work, record keeping, and accounting, program planning and research so as to secure the most

effective application of the probation system and the most efficient enforcement of the probation laws throughout the state. Such rules shall permit the establishment of a program of intensive supervision for juveniles directed to receive such services pursuant to paragraph (e) of subdivision three of section 353.2 or subdivision (e) of section seven hundred fifty-seven of the family court act, which may require participation by the juveniles in community-based rehabilitative programs. Such rules shall include, but not be limited to: specification of the maximum caseload levels and training required for intensive supervision probation officers; the frequency and nature of probation contacts with juveniles in the program, schools and other agencies; and supervision, treatment and other services to be provided to such juveniles. Such rules shall further provide for the establishment of a program of electronic monitoring for juveniles who are the subjects of juvenile delinquency petitions and would otherwise be detained prior to disposition pursuant to subdivision three of section 320.5 of the family court act and for adjudicated juvenile delinquents placed on probation on condition of cooperation with a program of electronic monitoring pursuant to paragraph (e) of subdivision three of section 353.2 of the family court act. Such rules shall provide that the probation investigations ordered by the court in designated felony act cases under subdivision one of section 351.1 of the family court act shall have priority over other cases arising under articles three and seven of such act. Such rules shall be binding upon all probation officers and when duly adopted shall have the force and effect of law, but shall not supersede rules that may be adopted pursuant to the family court act. He or she shall keep [himself] informed as to the work of all probation officers and shall from time to time inquire into and report upon their conduct and efficiency. He or she may investigate the work of any probation bureau or probation officer and shall have access to all records and probation offices. He or she may issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses or the production of books and papers. He or she may administer oaths and examine persons under oath. He or she may recommend to the appropriate authorities the removal of any probation officer. He or she shall transmit to the governor not later than February first of each year an annual report of the work of the division of probation and correctional alternatives for the preceding calendar year, which shall include such information relative to the administration of probation and correctional alternatives throughout the state as may be appropriate. He or she may from time to time publish reports regarding probation including probation in family courts, and the operation of the probation system including probation in family courts and any other information regarding probation as he or she may determine provided expenditures for such purpose are within amounts appropriated therefor.

§21. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law, provided that sections 4, 5 and 17 of this act shall take effect on the first day of April after it shall have become a law.

5. Implementation of the Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351]: subsidized kinship guardianship, sibling placements and contact, educational stability and transition plans for foster youth
(F.C.A. §§661, 1052, 1055-c, 1089, 1089-b; S.C.P.A. §§1701, 1702, 1704, 1705, 1706, 1707; Soc. Serv. L. §409-e)

On October 7, 2008, the most far-reaching Federal child welfare legislation in a decade, the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351], was signed into law. The benefits to children and families in New York State – and fiscally to the state, cities and counties – are numerous. The Act presents exciting opportunities for New York, as well as substantial challenges in terms of compliance. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has crafted a proposal to implement significant provisions of the Act.

First, the Committee’s proposal would establish New York’s first subsidized kinship guardianship program, availing New York of provisions in the Act derived from legislation first introduced by Senators Hillary Clinton and Olympia Snowe in 2007 as the Kinship Caregivers Support Act and long sought by the Judiciary, agencies and advocates alike in the state. Most recently, Children’s Rights, in its report, *The Long Road Home* (Nov., 2009) at pages 22, 89, recommended that New York State follow the lead of other states by availing itself of the Federal option for subsidized kinship guardianship. The Committee’s proposal would add subsidized kinship guardianship as a possible disposition in child protective and permanency proceedings. To reach this disposition, the prospective relative guardian must file a petition under Article 6 of the Family Court Act or Article 17 of the Surrogate’s Court Procedure Act with the court presiding over the child protective or permanency proceeding. The court may consolidate the hearing of the guardianship petition with the child protective disposition or permanency hearing. If guardianship is granted, all orders under the child protective or permanency proceeding, as applicable, would be terminated; no further permanency hearings would be held and no services or supervision would be provided.

Drawn directly from the Federal “Program Instruction” issued on December 24, 2008, section 409-e of the Social Services Law would be amended to set forth the tasks the local departments of social services must undertake and describe in family services plans in order to assess eligibility for, and to pursue, the guardianship option.²⁷ In order to appoint the relative as a guardian eligible for the subsidy, the court must make all of the following findings in accordance with new sections 1055-c or 1089-b of the Family Court Act:

- (i) the subsidized guardianship is in the child’s best interests and that neither a return to the child’s birth parents nor adoption would be appropriate permanency goals;
- (ii) the termination of orders will not jeopardize the child’s safety and that the guardianship will provide the child with a safe and permanent home;

²⁷ Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-07 (U.S. Dept. Of Health and Human Serv. Admin. For Children and Families Children’s Bureau, Dec. 24, 2008) at p. 4.

(iii) the child demonstrates a strong attachment to the relative and the relative demonstrates a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child;

(iv) the relative has been approved or certified as a foster parent and has had a background check, including a national criminal records check, in accordance with Social Services Law §378;

(v) the child has been in foster care in the care of the proposed guardian for a period of not less than six consecutive months preceding the filing of the guardianship petition and an order of fact-finding in the child protective proceeding has been issued;

(vi) the prospective relative guardian and the local department of social services consent to the appointment of the guardian and to the termination of orders issued in the child protective or permanency proceeding;

(vii) the local department of social services and the prospective relative guardian have entered into a written, binding kinship guardianship assistance agreement, a copy of which was provided by the local department of social services to the prospective relative guardian;²⁸ and

(viii) age-appropriate consultation has been held with the child and, if eighteen years of age or older, he or she has consented to the guardianship.

The child who is the subject of the guardianship would be represented by the same attorney as in the child protective or permanency proceeding and the prospective relative guardian could obtain resources for an attorney as a non-recurring expense up to \$2,000, pursuant to the *Federal Act*, similar to the practice in subsidized adoptions. The order appointing the guardian must require that the local department of social services and the attorney for the child receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to vacate or modify the order of subsidized guardianship.

Establishment of subsidized kinship guardianship as a permanency option in New York State is long overdue, as it had been utilized successfully in 38 states, plus the District of Columbia, prior to enactment of the Federal law. Twelve of these jurisdictions provided the subsidy through a Federal waiver, while the remainder utilized state, local and, in some instances, Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Social Services Block Grant funds. Since enactment, three jurisdictions (Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Tennessee) have obtained Federal approval for Title IV-E State Plan amendments to establish Federally subsidized Guardianship Assistance Programs under the new statute and eleven jurisdictions have applications pending with the Federal Department of Health and Human Services.²⁹ Extensive research has demonstrated the benefits of these programs:

- safe and stable placements with fewer disruptions and fewer instances of repeat maltreatment

²⁸ This agreement must be in place before the order appointing the guardian is issued. *See* Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-007 (U.S. Dept. Of Health and Human Serv. Admin. For Children and Families Children’s Bureau, Dec. 24, 2008) at p. 3.

²⁹ The eleven jurisdictions are: Connecticut, Maine, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, Washington and the District of Columbia. “Three States are Approved for Kinship-Guardianship Option, 11 More are Pending,” *CWLA Monitor*, Jan. 11, 2010. *See also* www.fosteringconnections.org.

than stranger foster care;

- an increased likelihood that children can be placed in their neighborhoods, stay in their schools of origin and be placed together with their siblings;
- a reduction in the over-representation of minority children in stranger foster care;
- a greater level of attachment by the children to their relative guardians and vice versa; and
- better scores on various cognitive, physical, skill-based and emotional domains and fewer behavioral problems than children in stranger foster care.

See Time for Reform: Support Relatives in Providing Foster Care and Permanent Families for Children (Children and Family Research Center, Kids are Waiting and Generations United, 2007); T.Conway & R. Hutson, *Is Kinship Good for Kids?* (Center for Law and Social Policy, Mar., 2007).

The authorization under the Federal *Act* for states to obtain Federal Title IV-E foster care reimbursement for the new “Guardianship Assistance program” (“GAP”) program and to provide categorical Medicaid eligibility for children covered under GAP presents an opportunity that New York State should not let pass by. Approximately one quarter of the State’s children in out-of-home care were in the care of relatives in 2008;³⁰ in New York City, the figure for FY 2009 was 33.9%.³¹ While guardianship may not be the solution for many – reunification and adoption remain the predominant permanency options – it may provide a welcome means of egress from the foster care system for some. Although Federal reimbursement will not cover 100% of the guardianship subsidy costs, the children who are eligible are already receiving foster care assistance with a mix of Federal, State and local aid. The fact that the appointment of the guardian terminates the court’s and the local social service’s district involvement with the family in terms of periodic permanency hearings, conferences, services and supervision will actually reduce the costs of these cases. Achievement of permanency for these children through subsidized guardianship will not only be a win for them; it will also be a win for the State in its efforts to improve its substandard record of achievement of the Federal permanency targets under the *Adoption and Safe Families Act*.³² *See Children’s Rights, Inc., The Long Road Home* 22, 89 (Nov., 2009).

Second, the Committee’s proposal would amend Article 10-A of the Family Court Act to add three elements to the permanency hearing report and court order in order to conform the statute more closely to salutary provisions of the Federal *Act*:

- Supplementing the statutory provisions in Family Court Act §1089 regarding the agency’s obligation to ensure school or vocational program enrollment, as applicable, the permanency report

³⁰ NYS Office of Children and Family Services, *Facts About Children in Foster Care in NYS - 2008* (www.ocfs.state.ny.us, accessed Jan. 7, 2010).

³¹ NYC Mayor’s Management Report FY 2009 (Sept., 2009) at p. 30; “Watching the Numbers,” *Child Welfare Watch* (Fall, 2009).

³² In the 2008 Federal “Child and Family Services Review,” New York State ranked almost last in the country in the speed at which it achieves permanency for its youth in care.

must describe “the steps that will be taken by the local social services district or agency to provide for educational stability for the child;”

- Supplementing the sibling placement and visitation provisions in Family Court Act §§1027-a and 1055(i), the permanency report and the order must include “any plans for visits and/or contacts with siblings;” and

- For youth whose permanency goal is “another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource”:

- the permanency report must describe the steps taken to develop and implement a transition plan, as well as an estimate of when a trial or permanent discharge of the youth is anticipated to occur; and

- the court order must direct that, where it is anticipated that the youth’s discharge or trial discharge may occur within the earlier of the next scheduled permanency hearing or one year, the local social services district or agency must commence development of a transition plan for the child, in consultation with the child and his or her attorney, and must file the final transition plan with the court and provide copies for the child, his or her attorney and all parties no later than ninety days before the child’s anticipated discharge from foster care. Although the Federal *Act* sets a bare minimum – *i.e.*, the transition plan must be filed 90 days in advance of the child’s exit from foster care – it is beyond question that the development and implementation of the transition plan must begin far in advance of that deadline.

Taken together, these additions to New York’s permanency statutes, coupled with the ground-breaking addition of the subsidized kinship guardianship option, will greatly improve permanency planning by facilitating faster achievement of safe, permanent homes for foster youth.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, the surrogate’s court procedure act and the social services law, in relation to implementation of the Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* with respect to subsidized kinship guardianship, educational stability, transition plans and sibling visitation and contact

____ The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 661 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (c) to read as follows:

(c) Subsidized kinship guardianship of a child. Where the permanency goal for a child who is the subject of a proceeding under article ten or ten-a of this act is referral for subsidized legal guardianship with a fit and willing relative, a petition under this article filed by such relative shall be filed with the court before whom the most recent proceeding under article ten or ten-A of this act is

pending. Where the child is the subject of a proceeding under article ten of this act, such petition may not be granted until the court has issued an order of fact-finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of section one thousand fifty-one of this act and a permanency hearing order pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of this act, whichever occurs later. The court presiding over the proceeding pursuant to article ten or ten-a may consolidate the hearing of a guardianship petition filed by such relative with the dispositional hearing under article ten or permanency hearing under article ten-a, as applicable. The court must make and set forth in its order appointing the guardian the findings enumerated in section one thousand fifty-five-c or one thousand eighty-nine-b of this act, as applicable. Such an order of subsidized guardianship may only be issued upon the consent of the prospective relative guardian, the local department of social services and, in the case of a youth eighteen years of age or older, the youth to the issuance of an order of subsidized kinship guardianship. An order of subsidized kinship guardianship may only be issued following age-appropriate consultation with the child. An order of subsidized kinship guardianship may only be issued once the local department of social services and the prospective relative guardian have entered into a written, binding kinship guardianship assistance agreement, a copy of which has been provided by the local department of social services to the prospective relative guardian. Where applicable, the court may also appoint the relative guardian as a permanent guardian pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section. The court shall provide in its order appointing a subsidized kinship guardian that the local department of social services and the attorney for the child must receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to vacate or modify the order of guardianship.

§2. Subdivision (a) and clause 7 of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (i) of subdivision (b) of section 1052 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 519 of the laws of 2008 and chapter 12 of the laws of 2006, respectively, are amended to read as follows:

(a) At the conclusion of a dispositional hearing under this article, the court shall enter an order of disposition directing one or more of the following:

- (i) suspending judgment in accord with section one thousand fifty-three of this part; or
- (ii) releasing the child to the custody of his or her parents or other person legally responsible for the child's care in accord with section one thousand fifty-four of this part; or
- (iii) placing the child in accord with section one thousand fifty-five of this part; or

- (iv) making an order of protection in accord with one thousand fifty-six of this part; or
- (v) placing the respondent under supervision in accord with section one thousand fifty-seven of this part; or
- (vi) granting custody of the child to relatives or suitable persons pursuant to section one thousand fifty-five-b of this part; or
- (vii) granting subsidized guardianship to a fit and willing relative pursuant to section one thousand fifty-five-c of this article.

However, the court shall not enter an order of disposition combining placement of the child under paragraph (iii) of this subdivision with a disposition under paragraph (i) or (ii) of this subdivision. An order granting custody of the child pursuant to paragraph (vi) or subsidized guardianship of a child pursuant to paragraph (vii) of this subdivision shall not be combined with any other disposition under this subdivision.

(7) If the court determines that reasonable efforts are not required because of one of the grounds set forth above, a permanency hearing shall be held within thirty days of the finding of the court that such efforts are not required. At the permanency hearing, the court shall determine the appropriateness of the permanency plan prepared by the social services official which shall include whether or when the child: (i) will be returned to the parent; (ii) should be placed for adoption with the social services official filing a petition for termination of parental rights; (iii) should be referred for legal guardianship, which may include subsidized kinship guardianship; (iv) should be placed permanently with a fit and willing relative; or (v) should be placed in another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult who is willing to be a permanency resource for the child, if the social services official has documented to the court a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interest of the child to return home, be referred for termination of parental rights and placed for adoption, placed with a fit and willing relative, or placed with a legal guardian. The social services official shall thereafter make reasonable efforts to place the child in a timely manner, including consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements, and to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child as set forth in the permanency plan approved by the court. If reasonable efforts are determined by the court not to be required because of one of the grounds set forth in this paragraph, the social services official may file a petition for termination of parental

rights in accordance with section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law.

[Unless] If the court finds that one of the grounds set forth in this paragraph exist, the court shall find that reasonable efforts are not required unless the court determines that providing reasonable efforts would be in the best interests of the child, would not be contrary to the health and safety of the child, and would likely result in the reunification of the parent and child in the foreseeable future. The court shall state such findings in its order.

For the purpose of this section, in determining reasonable [effort] efforts to be made with respect to a child, and in making such reasonable efforts, the child's health and safety shall be the paramount concern.

For the purpose of this section, a sibling shall include a half-sibling;

§3. Subparagraph (A) of paragraph (v) of subdivision (a) of section 1055-b of the family court act, as added by chapter 519 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

(A) If a parent or parents fail to [contest] consent to the granting of custody or guardianship under article six of this act, the court finds that extraordinary circumstances exist that support granting an order of custody or guardianship under article six of this act; or

§ 4. Article 10 of the family court act is amended by adding a new section 1055-c to read as follows:

§1055-c. Subsidized guardianship with a fit and willing relative. (a) At the conclusion of a dispositional hearing under this article, where the permanency goal is subsidized guardianship with a fit and willing relative, the court may issue an order of subsidized guardianship in response to a petition filed with the court by a relative under article six of this act or under article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act. A petition for subsidized kinship guardianship may not be granted until the court has issued an order of fact-finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of section one thousand fifty-one of this act and the first permanency hearing order pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of this act, whichever occurs later. If the court grants the guardianship petition, it shall terminate jurisdiction over the child protective proceeding and terminate any pending orders under this article other than assignment of counsel. The court may grant the guardianship petition only if the court makes the following findings and sets forth the findings in its order:

(i) that granting subsidized guardianship of the child to the relative is in the best interests of

the child and that neither a permanency goal of return to the child's birth parents nor adoption would be in the child's best interests and are therefore not appropriate permanency goals for the child; and

(ii) that the termination of orders issued pursuant to this article will not jeopardize the safety of the child; and that granting subsidized guardianship of the child to the relative will provide the child with a safe and permanent home; and

(iii) that the child demonstrates a strong attachment to the relative and the relative demonstrates a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child; and

(iv) that the relative has been approved or certified as a foster parent pursuant to regulations of the office of children and family services and has been screened in accordance with section three hundred seventy-eight-a of the social services law; and

(v) that the child has been in foster care in the care of the proposed guardian for a period of not less than six consecutive months preceding the filing of the guardianship petition; and

(vi) that the relative and the local department of social services consent to the issuance of an order of subsidized guardianship under article six of this act or under article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act and the termination of any orders issued pursuant to this article; and

(vii) that the local department of social services and the prospective relative guardian have entered into a written, binding kinship guardianship assistance agreement, a copy of which has been provided by the local department of social services to the prospective relative guardian; and

(viii) that age-appropriate consultation has been held with the child, and if eighteen years of age or older, that he or she has consented to the guardianship.

(b) As part of the order granting subsidized guardianship to the relative pursuant to article six of this act or under article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act, the court shall require that the local department of social services and the attorney for the child receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to vacate or modify the order of subsidized guardianship.

(c) An order entered pursuant to this section shall result in the termination of any orders in effect pursuant to this article and shall conclude the court's jurisdiction over the proceeding under this article.

§5. Subdivision (c) of section 1089 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 327 of the laws of 2007, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Content of the permanency hearing report. The permanency hearing report shall include, but need not be limited to, up-to-date and accurate information regarding:

(1) the child's current permanency goal, which may be:

(i) return to the parent or parents;

(ii) placement for adoption with the local social services official filing a petition for termination of parental rights;

(iii) referral for legal guardianship, which may include subsidized kinship guardianship;

(iv) permanent placement with a fit and willing relative; or

(v) placement in another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult who is willing to be a permanency resource for the child, including documentation of the compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interests of the child to be returned home, placed for adoption, placed with a legal guardian, or placed with a fit and willing relative;

(2) the health, well-being, and status of the child since the last hearing including:

(i) a description of the child's health and well-being;

(ii) information regarding the child's current placement;

(iii) an update on the educational and other progress the child has made since the last hearing including a description of the steps that have been taken by the local social services district or agency to ensure educational stability for the child and to enable prompt delivery of appropriate educational and vocational services to the child, including, but not be limited to:

(A) where the child is subject to article sixty-five of the education law or elects to participate in an educational program leading to a high school diploma, the steps that the local social services district or agency has taken to promptly enable the child to be enrolled or to continue enrollment in an appropriate school or educational program leading to a high school diploma;

(B) where the child is eligible to be enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program pursuant to section thirty-six hundred two-e of the education law, the steps that the local social services district or agency has taken to promptly enable the child to be enrolled in an appropriate pre-kindergarten program, if available;

(C) where the child is under three years of age and is involved in an indicated case of child

abuse or neglect, or where the local social services district suspects that the child may have a disability as defined in subdivision five of section twenty-five hundred forty-one of the public health law or if the child has been found eligible to receive early intervention or special educational services prior to or during the foster care placement, in accordance with title two-A of article twenty-five of the public health law or article eighty-nine of the education law, the steps that the local social services district or agency has taken to make any necessary referrals of the child for early intervention, pre-school special educational or special educational evaluations or services, as appropriate, and any available information regarding any evaluations and services which are being provided or are scheduled to be provided in accordance with applicable law; and

(D) where the child is at least sixteen and not subject to article sixty-five of the education law and elects not to participate in an educational program leading to a high school diploma, the steps that the local social services district has taken to assist the child to become gainfully employed or enrolled in a vocational program;

(iv) a description of the visitation plan or plans describing the persons with whom the child visits, including any siblings, and the frequency, duration and quality of the visits;

(v) where a child has attained the age of fourteen, a description of the services and assistance that are being provided to enable the child to learn independent living skills; [and]

(vi) where the permanency goal for a child aging out of foster care is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child and it is anticipated that the child's discharge or trial discharge may occur within the earlier of the next scheduled permanency hearing or one year, a description of the transition plan for the youth and the progress made in developing and implementing the transition plan; and

(vii) a description of any other services being provided to the child;

(3) the status of the parent, including:

(i) the services that have been offered to the parent to enable the child to safely return home;

(ii) the steps the parent has taken to use the services;

(iii) any barriers encountered to the delivery of such services;

(iv) the progress the parent has made toward reunification; and

(v) a description of any other steps the parent has taken to comply with and achieve the

permanency [plan] goal, if applicable[.];

(4) a description of the reasonable efforts to achieve the child's permanency [plan] goal that have been taken by the local social services district or agency since the last hearing. The description shall include:

(i) unless the child is freed for adoption or there has been a determination by a court that such efforts are not required pursuant to section one thousand thirty-nine-b of this act, the reasonable efforts that have been made by the local social services district or agency to eliminate the need for placement of the child and to enable the child to safely return home, including a description of any services that have been provided;

(ii) where the permanency [plan] goal is adoption, guardianship (including subsidized kinship guardianship), placement with a fit and willing relative or another planned permanent living arrangement other than return to parent, the reasonable efforts that have been made by the local social services district or agency to make and finalize such alternate permanent placement, including a description of any services that have been provided and a description of the consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements;

(iii) where return home of the child is not likely, the reasonable efforts that have been made by the local social services district or agency to evaluate and plan for another permanent plan, including consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements, and any steps taken to further a permanent plan other than return to the child's parent; or

(iv) where a child has been freed for adoption, a description of the reasonable efforts that will be taken to facilitate the adoption of the child; and

(5) the recommended permanency [plan] goal including:

(i) a recommendation regarding whether the child's current permanency goal should be continued or modified, the reasons therefor, and the anticipated date for meeting the goal;

(ii) a recommendation regarding whether the child's placement should be extended and the reasons for the recommendation;

(iii) any proposed changes in the child's current placement, trial discharge or discharge that may occur before the next permanency hearing;

(iv) a description of the steps that will be taken by the local social services district or agency to provide for educational stability for the child and to continue to enable prompt delivery of appropriate educational and vocational services to the child in his or her current placement and during

any potential change in the child's foster care placement, during any trial discharge, and after discharge of the child in accordance with the plans for the child's placement until the next permanency hearing;

(v) whether any modification to the visitation plan or plans is recommended and the reasons therefor, including any plans for visits and/or contacts with siblings;

(vi) where a child has attained the age of fourteen or will attain the age of fourteen before the next permanency hearing, a description of the services and assistance that will be provided to enable the child to learn independent living skills;

(vii) what steps, if any, will be taken for the development and implementation of a transition plan for any child whose permanency goal is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child and when discharge or trial discharge to such arrangement is anticipated to take place; and

(viii) where a child has been placed outside this state, whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate, necessary and in the best interests of the child;

[(viii)] (ix) where return home of the child is not likely, the efforts that will be made to evaluate or plan for another permanent plan, including consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements; and

[(ix)] (x) in the case of a child who has been freed for adoption:

(A) a description of services and assistance that will be provided to the child and the prospective adoptive parent to expedite the adoption of the child;

(B) information regarding the child's eligibility for adoption subsidy pursuant to title nine of article six of the social services law; and

(C) if the child is over age fourteen and has voluntarily withheld his or her consent to an adoption, the facts and circumstances regarding the child's decision to withhold consent and the reasons therefor.

§6. Subparagraphs (i), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vii) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 327 of the laws of 2007, are amended to read as follows:

(i) whether the permanency goal for the child should be approved or modified and the anticipated date for achieving the goal. The permanency goal may be determined to be:

- (A) return to parent;
- (B) placement for adoption with the local social services official filing a petition for termination of parental rights;
- (C) referral for legal guardianship, which may include subsidized kinship guardianship;
- (D) permanent placement with a fit and willing relative; or
- (E) placement in another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child if the local social services official has documented to the court a compelling reason for determining that it would not be in the best interests of the child to return home, be referred for termination of parental rights and placed for adoption, placed with a fit and willing relative, or placed with a legal guardian;

(iii) determining whether reasonable efforts have been made to effectuate the child's permanency [plan] goal as follows:

(A) unless the child is freed for adoption or there has been a determination by a court that such efforts are not required pursuant to section one thousand thirty-nine-b of this act, whether reasonable efforts have been made to eliminate the need for placement of the child and to enable the child to safely return home;

(B) where the permanency [plan] goal is adoption, guardianship, placement with a fit and willing relative or another planned permanent living arrangement other than return to parent, whether reasonable efforts have been made to make and finalize such alternate permanent placement, including consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements;

(iv) where return home of the child is not likely, what efforts should be made to evaluate or plan for another permanent plan, including consideration of appropriate in-state and out-of-state placements;

(v) the steps that must be taken by the local social services official or agency to implement the educational and vocational program components of the permanency hearing report submitted pursuant to subdivision (c) of this section, including steps to ensure educational stability for the child and any modifications that should be made to such plan;

(vii) where placement of the child is extended, such order shall also include:

(A) a description of the visitation plan or plans, including any plans for visits and/or contact with the child's siblings;

(B) where the child is not freed for adoption, a direction that the child's parent or parents,

including any non-respondent parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care shall be notified of the planning conference or conferences to be held pursuant to subdivision three of section four hundred nine-e of the social services law and notification of their right to attend such conference or conferences and their right to have counsel or another representative with them;

(C) where the child is not freed for adoption, a direction that the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care keep the local social services district or agency apprised of his or her current whereabouts and a current mailing address;

(D) where the child is not freed for adoption, a notice that if the child remains in foster care for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months, the local social services district or agency may be required by law to file a petition to terminate parental rights;

(E) where a child has been freed for adoption and is over age fourteen and has voluntarily withheld his or her consent to an adoption, the facts and circumstances with regard to the child's decision to withhold consent and the reasons therefor;

(F) where a child has been placed outside of this state, whether the out-of-state placement continues to be appropriate, necessary and in the best interests of the child;

(G) where a child has or will before the next permanency hearing reach the age of fourteen, the services and assistance necessary to assist the child in learning independent living skills;

(H) where the permanency goal for a child aging out of foster care is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child and it is anticipated that the child's discharge or trial discharge may occur within the earlier of the next scheduled permanency hearing or one year, the local social services district or agency shall be directed to commence development of a transition plan for the child, in consultation with the child and his or her attorney, and shall file the final transition plan with the court and provide copies for the child, his or her attorney and all parties no later than ninety days before the child's anticipated discharge from foster care; and

___§7. The family court act is amended by adding a new section 1089-b to read as follows:

§1089-b. Subsidized guardianship with a fit and willing relative. (a) Where the permanency goal is subsidized legal guardianship with a fit and willing relative, the court may issue an order of subsidized guardianship in response to a petition filed before the court by a relative under article six of this act or article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act, provided, however, that where

the child is the subject of a pending proceeding under article ten of this act, such petition may not be granted until the court has issued an order of fact-finding pursuant to subdivision (a) of section one thousand fifty-one of this act and the first permanency order pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of this act, whichever occurs later. The court may consolidate the hearing of the petition with a permanency hearing held pursuant to this article. If the court grants the guardianship petition, the court shall terminate its jurisdiction under this article and shall terminate all pending orders issued pursuant to this article other than appointment of counsel. The court may only grant the guardianship petition if it makes the following findings and sets forth the findings in its order:

(i) that granting subsidized guardianship of the child to the relative is in the best interests of the child and that neither a permanency goal of return to the child's birth parents nor adoption would be in the child's best interests and therefore would not be appropriate permanency goals for the child; and

(ii) that the termination of the order placing the child pursuant to this article or article ten of this act will not jeopardize the safety of the child; and that granting subsidized guardianship of the child to the relative will provide the child with a safe and permanent home; and

(iii) that the child demonstrates a strong attachment to the relative and the relative demonstrates a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child; and

(iv) that the relative has been approved or certified as a foster parent pursuant to regulations of the office of children and family services and has been screened in accordance with section three hundred seventy-eight-a of the social services law; and

(v) that the child has been in foster care in the care of the proposed guardian for a period of not less than six consecutive months preceding the filing of the guardianship petition; and

(vi) that the relative and the local department of social services consent to the issuance of an order of subsidized guardianship under article six of this act or under article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act and the termination of the order of placement pursuant to this article or article ten of this act; and

(vii) that the local department of social services and the prospective relative guardian have entered into a written, binding kinship guardianship assistance agreement, a copy of which has been provided by the local department of social services to the prospective relative guardian. and

(viii) that age-appropriate consultation has been held with the child, and, if eighteen years of age or older, he or she has consented to the guardianship.

(b) As part of the order granting subsidized guardianship to the relative pursuant to article six of this act or under article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act, the court shall require that the local department of social services and the attorney for the child receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to modify the order of guardianship granted pursuant to the guardianship proceeding.

(c) An order entered pursuant to this section shall result in the termination of any orders in effect pursuant to this article and shall conclude the court's jurisdiction over the proceeding under this article or article ten of this act.

_____§8. Section 1701 of the surrogate's court procedure act, as amended by chapter 404 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

§1701. Power of court. The court has power over the property of an infant and is authorized and empowered to appoint a guardian of the person or of the property or of both of an infant whether or not the parent or parents of the infant or child are living. Where the guardianship and custody of a child have been committed to an authorized agency pursuant to section six hundred thirty-one of the family court act, or section three hundred eighty-three-c, section three hundred eighty-four or section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, or where both parents of the child whose consent to the adoption of the child would have been required pursuant to section one hundred eleven-a of the domestic relations law are dead, the court may appoint a permanent guardian of a child if the court finds that such appointment is in the best interests of the child. Where the court has made findings pursuant to section one thousand fifty-five-c or one thousand eighty-nine-b of the family court act, the family court may appoint a fit and willing relative to be a subsidized kinship guardian of the child. Where applicable, the court may also appoint the relative guardian as a permanent guardian of the child.

§9. Section 1702 of the surrogate's court procedure act is amended by adding a new subdivision 3 to read as follows:

3. The petition for appointment of a relative as a subsidized kinship guardian of the child shall be filed with the court where the most recent child protective proceeding or permanency hearing

is pending.

§10. Subdivision 8 of section 1704 of the surrogate's court procedure act, as added by chapter 404 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

8. In addition, the petition for appointment of a permanent guardian or subsidized kinship guardian of an infant or child shall include:

(a) an assessment to be performed by the local social services district, which shall contain:

(i) the full name and address of the person seeking to become the guardian;

(ii) the ability of the guardian to assume permanent care of the child;

(iii) the child's property and assets, if known;

(iv) the wishes of the child, [if appropriate] based upon age-appropriate consultation with the child, and the child's consent if he or she is eighteen years of age or older;

(v) the results of the criminal history record check with the division of criminal justice services of the guardian and any person eighteen years of age or older residing in the guardian's household conducted by the office of children and family services pursuant to subdivision two of section three hundred seventy-eight-a of the social services law if such a criminal history record check has been completed;

(vi) the results of a search of the statewide central register of child abuse and maltreatment records regarding the guardian and any person eighteen years of age or older residing in the guardian's household, including whether such person has been the subject of an indicated report conducted pursuant to subparagraph (e) of paragraph (A) of subdivision four of section four hundred twenty-two of the social services law, if such a search has been conducted; and

(vii) the results of all inspections and assessments of the guardian's home and the child's progress while placed in the home, if any;

(b) in proceedings for the appointment of a permanent guardian or subsidized kinship guardian of a child freed for adoption, a certified copy of the order or orders terminating the parental rights of the child's parents or approving the surrender of the child or, in proceedings for appointment of a permanent guardian where the child's parents are deceased, the death certificates of the child's parents, as applicable;

(c) the recommendation of the authorized agency involved, if any; [and]

(d) the suitability, ability and commitment of the permanent or subsidized kinship guardian to assume full legal responsibility for the child and raise the child to adulthood and the degree of attachment of the child to the proposed relative guardian; and

(e) in proceedings for the appointment of a subsidized kinship guardian:

(i) the reasons that granting subsidized guardianship of the child to the relative is in the best interests of the child and that neither a permanency goal of return to the child's birth parents nor adoption would be in the child's best interests and would, therefore, not be appropriate permanency goals for the child;

(ii) the reasons that the termination of the order placing the child pursuant to article ten or ten-a of the family court act will not jeopardize the safety of the child; and that granting subsidized guardianship of the child to the prospective relative guardian will provide the child with a safe and permanent home;

(iii) the length of time that the relative has been approved or certified as a foster parent, the length of time the prospective relative guardian has provided foster care for the child and the length of time the child has been in foster care prior to the filing of the guardianship petition;

(iv) the consent of the prospective relative guardian and the local department of social services to the issuance of an order of subsidized kinship guardianship; and

(v) a copy of the written, binding kinship guardianship assistance agreement entered into by the local department of social services and the prospective relative guardian.

§11. Subdivision 1 of section 1705 of the surrogate's court procedure act is amended by adding a new paragraph (d) to read as follows:

(d) in proceedings for the appointment of a permanent or subsidized kinship guardian, the attorney for the child and the local department of social services.

§12. Subdivision 1 of section 1706 of the surrogate's court procedure act, as amended by chapter 404 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

1. Where process is not issued or upon the return of process, the court shall ascertain the age of the infant, the amount of his or her personal property, the gross amount of the rents and profits

of his or her real estate during his or her minority and the sufficiency of the security offered by the proposed guardian. With respect to applications for appointment as a permanent or subsidized kinship guardian of a child, the permanent guardian shall have the right and responsibility to make decisions, including issuing any necessary consents, regarding the child's protection, education, care and control, health and medical needs, and the physical custody of the person of the child[, and]. A permanent guardian may consent to the adoption of the child. Provided, however, that nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to limit the ability of a child to consent to his or her own medical care as may be otherwise provided by law. [If the infant is over the age of fourteen years,] Age-appropriate consultation shall be held with the child and the court shall ascertain his or her preference for a suitable guardian. Notwithstanding any other section of law, where the [infant] child is over the age of eighteen, [the infant] he or she shall consent to the appointment of a suitable guardian.

§13. Section 1707 of the surrogate's court procedure act, as amended by chapter 404 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

§1707. Decree appointing guardian; terms of office. 1. If the court [be] is satisfied that the interests of the infant will be promoted by the appointment of a guardian or by the issuance of temporary letters of guardianship of his or her person or of his or her property, or of both, it must make a decree accordingly. If the court determines that appointment of a permanent guardian is in the best interests of the infant or child, the court shall issue a decree appointing such guardian. If the court makes the findings required by sections one thousand fifty-five-c or one thousand eighty-nine-b of the family court act, the court shall issue a decree appointing the relative as a subsidized kinship guardian. Where applicable, the court may also appoint the relative guardian as a permanent guardian of the child. The same person may be appointed guardian of both the person and the property of the infant or the guardianship of the person and of the property may be committed to different persons. The court may appoint a person other than the parent of the infant or the person nominated by the petitioner. When the court is informed that the infant, a person nominated to be a guardian of such infant, the petitioner, or any individual eighteen years of age or over who resides in the home of the proposed guardian is a subject of or another person named in an indicated report, as such terms are defined in section four hundred twelve of the social services law, filed with the statewide register of child abuse and maltreatment pursuant to title six of article six of the social services law or is or has been the subject of or the respondent in or a party to a child protective proceeding commenced

under article ten of the family court act which resulted in an order finding that the child is an abused or neglected child the court shall obtain such records regarding such report or proceeding as it deems appropriate and shall give the information contained therein due consideration in its determination.

2. The term of office of a guardian of the person or property so appointed expires when the [infant] child attains majority, unless the [infant] child consents to the continuation of or appointment of a guardian after his or her eighteenth birthday, in which case such term of office expires on his or her twenty-first birthday, or after such other shorter period as the court establishes upon good cause shown; except that the term of office of a guardian of the person of [an infant] a child expires upon the [infant's] child's marriage prior to attaining majority. The appointment of a permanent guardian or subsidized kinship guardian of a child shall expire when the [infant or] child reaches the age of eighteen years, unless the [infant or] child consents to the continuation of a guardian after his or her eighteenth birthday, in which case such term of office expires on his or her twenty-first birthday, or unless vacated by the court prior to the [infant or] child's eighteenth or twenty-first birthday if the court finds that, based upon clear and convincing evidence, the guardian failed to or is unable, unavailable or unwilling to provide proper care and custody of the infant or child, or that the guardianship is no longer in the best interests of the infant or child. The court shall provide in its order appointing a subsidized kinship guardian that the local department of social services and the attorney for the child must receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to vacate or modify the order of guardianship.

§14. Section 409-e of the social services law is amended by renumbering subdivisions 5 and 6 as 6 and 7, respectively, and by adding a new subdivision 5 to read as follows:

5. Subsidized kinship guardianship assessment. With respect to each child with a permanency goal of placement with a prospective relative guardian and receipt of kinship guardian assistance payments, the family service plan must include the following specific information:

(a) how the child meets the eligibility requirements;

(b) the steps the agency has taken to determine that return to the home or adoption is not appropriate;

(c) the efforts the agency has made to discuss adoption with the child's relative foster parent and the reasons why adoption is not an option;

(d) the efforts the agency has made to discuss kinship guardianship with the child's birth parent or parents or the reasons why efforts were not made;

(e) the reason why a permanent placement with a prospective relative guardian and receipt of a kinship guardian assistance payment is in the child's best interests;

(f) the efforts made by the agency to discuss with the child's birth parent or parents the kinship guardianship assistance arrangements or why efforts were not made; and

(g) the reasons why the child is separated from his or her siblings, if the child's siblings are not also in foster care with the prospective relative guardian.

§15. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

6. Duration of term of probation and procedures
for violations of probation in child support proceedings
(F.C.A. §§454, 456)

To realize the statutory goal of providing adequate support to New York's children, the Family Court must be able to rigorously enforce its orders. To do that, it must be able to secure compliance through imposition of a diverse array of sanctions that are appropriate in severity and responsive to the individual problems presented. License suspensions, Department of Taxation and Finance referrals, lottery and tax refund interceptions, sequestration of property, imposition of income deduction orders and referrals to rehabilitative or work programs, where available, are all useful tools in particular cases. *See* Family Court Act §454, et seq. However, in particularly intractable cases of willful violations of court orders for child support, including those involving child support obligors who are self-employed or who are paid in cash or "off the books," the ultimate sanction of incarceration may be the only meaningful sanction currently available to the Court. Clearly, incarceration, which at least temporarily cuts off a support obligor's earning capacity altogether, is a costly, sometimes self-defeating option that must be reserved for cases in which lesser sanctions have been exhausted or are not efficacious.

Along the continuum of child support sanctions for willful violations, there must be a means of providing regular, in-person monitoring by someone in authority who can compel a change of behavior under threat of a more serious sanction and who may be able, at the same time, to provide services and rehabilitative assistance to the support obligor that will facilitate compliance with child support obligations. That vital in-person monitoring and provision of individualized assistance may best be provided by placing a support obligor on probation. However, while explicitly authorized in the Family Court Act, probation has proven to be an unworkable and rarely-utilized tool in Family Court child support cases. Moreover, there is no authorization in the Family Court Act to combine either a probation sanction or a requirement to participate in a rehabilitative program with a sentence of incarceration, even though such a combination may present the most promise in some cases to compel the change of an offender's behavior necessary to remediate the violation and ensure consistent, future provision of child support to the offender's family. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has identified statutory impediments to the effective use of probation in child support cases and is proposing a proposal to address these problems.

First, in order to make probation less costly for local probation departments and fairer to the probationers, the proposal would impose a limit on the duration of probation more commensurate with probation in other contexts. Alone among probation provisions in both the Family Court Act and Criminal Procedure Law, Family Court Act §456 permits a child support obligor to be placed on probation for an extended period of time, *i.e.*, the entire duration of a child support or visitation order or order of protection. Since a child support order may last until the youngest child reaches the age of 21, this may mean more than two decades of probation – four times greater than the duration of probation for all but the most serious felonies. *Cf.* Penal Law §65(3). This disproportionate degree of supervision is beyond the capacity of most local probation departments to provide, particularly in times of fiscal constraint, and may explain the reluctance of probation departments to become

involved in child support matters. The Committee's proposal, therefore, would impose the same time limit that exists for person in need of supervision (PINS) cases in Family Court – *i.e.*, not more than one year, a period that may be extended, after notice to the support obligor and an opportunity to be heard, for an additional year upon a finding of exceptional circumstances.

Second, the proposal would provide the needed flexibility to the menu of sanctions available for willful violations of child support orders by adding an authorization to combine a sentence of probation or a sentence of participation in a rehabilitative program with a sentence of incarceration. Family Court Act §454(3)(a) already permits a sentence of intermittent incarceration to be imposed, including, for example, weekend incarceration so that an offender may work or seek gainful employment during the week. The effectiveness of this sanction, as well as sanctions of short periods of incarceration, would be significantly enhanced if the Family Court had the ability to combine it with probation supervision

Finally, Family Court Act §456 is entirely silent regarding procedures to be followed in the event of a violation of probation. All too often, the burden falls upon custodial parents to take time off from work to prepare, file and arrange service of violation petitions. Again comparable to other probation violation provisions, the Committee's proposal would instead require the local probation department to file a verified probation violation petition and would provide an opportunity for the probationer and parties to be heard as prerequisites to revocation of probation in the event of a willful violation. As in criminal, juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings, the proposal would provide that the period of probation would be tolled as of the date of filing of the violation petition. *See* Penal Law §65.15(2); Family Court Act §§360.2(4), 779-a. Further, in the event the violation petition is not sustained, the tolling period would be credited to the period of probation. Providing a mechanism consistent with due process to bring alleged child support violators to the attention of the Family Court would benefit the families as well – taking the onus off of custodial parents to initiate and prosecute violation proceedings that should instead be handled by local probation departments.

Enactment of this proposal would afford the Family Court essential, flexible tools with which to address willful violation of its child support orders so as to spur offenders to modify their behavior and live up to their child support obligations. It would make probation a viable alternative for probation departments by defining the contours of its duration and delineating procedures to be utilized in the event of a violation of its terms and conditions. Further, the proposal would augment the effectiveness of both probation and the requirement for the respondent to participate in a rehabilitative program by authorizing these sanctions to be combined with a sentence or suspended sentence of incarceration. In so doing, the proposed statute would improve the collection of child support for the children in the State, would make the probation provisions fairer for support obligors and would greatly enhance the Family Court's capacity to respond effectively to serious instances of willful violations of child support that are so detrimental to children in New York State.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to sanctions for willful failure to comply with court orders for child support

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 3 of section 454 of the family court act is amended and a new paragraph (d) is added to such section to read as follows:

(c) place the respondent on probation [under] for up to one year pursuant to section four hundred fifty-six of this article upon such conditions as the court may determine and in accordance with the provisions of the criminal procedure law; or

(d) combine a sentence or a suspended sentence of incarceration pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subdivision with a requirement that the respondent participate in a rehabilitative program or be placed on probation pursuant to paragraph (b) or (c) of this subdivision, respectively.

§2. Section 456 of the family court act, as added by chapter 809 of the laws of 1963, is amended to read as follows:

§456. Probation. (a) No person may be placed on probation under this article unless the court makes an order to that effect, either at the time of the making of an order of support or under section four hundred fifty-four. The order of probation may contain such conditions as the court may determine. The maximum period of probation may [continue so long as an order of support, order of protection or order of visitation applies to such person] not exceed one year. If the court finds, at the conclusion of the original period, upon notice and an opportunity to be heard, that exceptional circumstances require an additional year of probation, the court may continue probation for an additional year.

(b) [The] If the court [may at any time, where circumstances warrant it, revoke an order of] finds, after a hearing, that a party who has been placed on probation [. Upon such revocation, the probationer shall be brought to court, which may, without further hearing,] in accordance with this section, has willfully violated any term or condition of probation, the court, after giving notice and an opportunity to be heard to the parties and the attorney for the child, if any, may revoke such order of probation and may make any order [that might have been made at the time the order of probation was made] authorized by section four hundred fifty-four of this article. No such finding may be made unless a verified petition subscribed to by the probation service or the appropriate government agency has been filed and duly served upon the parties. The petition must stipulate the condition or

conditions of the order violated and a reasonable description of the time, place, and manner in which the violation occurred. Non-hearsay allegations or allegations made upon information and belief of the factual part of the petition or of any supporting deposition must establish, if true, every violation charged. The period of probation shall be deemed tolled as of the date of filing of the probation violation petition, but, in the event that the court does not find that the order of probation was willfully violated, the period of such interruption shall be credited to the period of probation.

§3. This act shall take effect immediately.

7. Conditions of orders of protection in matrimonial proceedings and procedures and remedies for violations of orders of protection in Family Court and matrimonial proceedings (F.C.A. §§430, 446, 550, 551, 655, 656, 841, 846-a; D.R.L. §§240, 252)

The *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act* of 1994 was accompanied by a legislative finding that “there are few more prevalent or more serious problems confronting the families and households of New York than domestic violence. ...The victims of family offenses must be entitled to the fullest protections of the civil and criminal laws.” Laws of 1994, ch. 222, §1. To that end, concurrent civil and criminal jurisdiction was provided both for initial issuance and for enforcement of orders of protection. In addition to enhancing criminal penalties for violations of orders of protection, subsequent amendments strengthened civil enforcement remedies, both in Family and Supreme Courts. *See, e.g.*, Laws of 1996, ch. 644; Laws of 1999, ch. 606, 635. However, fragmentation and gaps in the civil enforcement provisions of both the Family Court Act and Domestic Relations Law impede fulfillment of the promise of the 1994 legislation.

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has developed a legislative proposal designed to ensure equity and provide a clear road map for civil enforcement of orders of protection in both Family and Supreme Courts. The proposal clarifies that the violation procedures and consequences contained in Article 8 of the Family Court Act apply to all orders of protection and temporary orders of protection issued in family offense, child support, paternity, child custody, visitation, divorce and other matrimonial proceedings. Significantly, it would incorporate conditions of orders of protection contained in the Family Court family offense and custody provisions that had been omitted from the conditions enumerated for orders of protection in matrimonial orders of protection, specifically, conditions regarding participation in batterers’ education programs and compensation for medical care and treatment.

Additionally, consistent with chapter 579 of the Laws of 2003, the proposal would amend Family Court Act §841(c) to authorize the Family Court to place a respondent on probation for a period of up to two years or, where an order of protection pursuant to Family Court Act §842 has been issued for five years, a period of up to five years. Since Family Court Act §841 explicitly authorizes concurrent issuance of both an order of probation and an order of protection as a disposition of an Article 8 family offense proceeding, consistency in the law dictates that the duration of both orders should be the same. Indeed, when the Family Court Act was first enacted in 1962, both the duration of probation and of orders of protection were set at one year. *See* Laws of 1962, ch. 686. Clearly, the duration of probation supervision over a respondent in a family offense matter should be coextensive with the duration of the order of protection, *i.e.*, coextensive with the period of time determined by the Family Court as the period necessary to protect a victim of family violence from suffering further violence.

Violation procedures would be clarified by the incorporation by reference in sections 430, 446, 550, 551 and 655 and 656 of the Family Court Act of the following:

- the procedures contained in Family Court Act §846 for filing a violation petition, serving

notice upon, and, if necessary, apprehending the respondent, and obtaining either a determination in Family Court or a transfer of the matter to a criminal court;

- the remedies contained in Family Court Act §§842-a and 846-a that are available to the Family Court once a willful violation of an order of protection or temporary order of protection has been found;³³ and

- the options contained in Family Court Act §847 for a victim of an alleged act constituting a family offense to seek the filing of an accusatory instrument in a criminal court,³⁴ as well as to file a new family offense petition or a violation petition.

Further, section 846-a of the Family Court Act would be amended to more clearly delineate the powers of the Family Court to impose sanctions upon a finding of a willful violation of an order of protection or temporary order of protection and to modify or issue a new order of protection or temporary order of protection. The Court's authority to place a violator on probation and to require, as a condition of probation, *inter alia*, that the violator participate and pay the costs of a batterer's education program would be articulated – a recommendation consistent with the statutorily-required evaluation of the 1994 legislation by the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Division of Criminal Justice Services.³⁵ Where a violator is already on probation, the Court would be authorized to revoke or modify the order of probation and order any other remedy. Additionally, the proposal would clarify the Court's power to compel payment of the protected party's legal fees and costs, fees and costs for the child's attorney, restitution and medical expenses, as well as the Court's authority to suspend an order of visitation or require that visitation be supervised. None of these are new powers; all are powers currently exercised by the Courts. *See, e.g., Matter of C.B. v. J.U.*, 5 Misc.3d 1004 (Sup. Ct., N.Y. Co., 2004) (supervised visitation ordered).

Consolidating several scattered provisions, the proposal would also enumerate the options available to the Court to commit the violator to jail for up to six months per violation,³⁶ revoke or suspend a firearms license and direct the surrender of firearms. Significantly, the proposal would conform the firearms provision [Family Court Act §842-a] to the 2007 amendment that was made to its Criminal Procedure Law counterpart [Laws of 2007, ch. 198, amending CPL §530.14] by requiring suspension or revocation of a firearms license, ineligibility for a license and mandatory surrender of firearms where the court has good cause to believe that the respondent has a prior finding for a violation of an order of protection involving infliction of physical injury. The sponsors' justification for that amendment hold no less true for orders of protection issued in Family Court and matrimonial proceedings:

³³ In child support and paternity cases, these remedies would be available in addition to those already provided for violations of child support orders pursuant to Article 4, Part 5 of the Family Court Act.

³⁴ This option is, of course, circumscribed by considerations of prosecutorial discretion and, if the elements of the crime alleged are identical to those alleged in a Family Court violation petition, by constitutional double jeopardy principles. *See United States v. Dixon*, 509 U.S. 688 (1993); *People v. Wood*, 95 N.Y.2d 509 (2000); *People v. Arnold*, 174 Misc.2d 585 (Sup. Ct., Kings Co., 1997). Pursuant to chapter 125 of the Laws of 1999, a complainant's election to proceed in Family Court does not divest a criminal court of jurisdiction to proceed.

³⁵ *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act of 1994: Evaluation of the Mandatory Arrest Provisions: Third Interim Report to the Governor and the Legislature* (Oct., 2000), pp. 14, 30.

³⁶ Consecutive terms may be imposed for each violation incident. *Walker v. Walker*, 86 N.Y.2d 624 (1995).

Orders of protection are intended to prevent violent crimes from occurring and are commonly issued in cases involving domestic violence. However, individuals against whom such orders are issued often ignore the restrictions contained in such orders and, when they possess a firearm, the consequences can be tragic. This bill seeks to minimize the risk that a person who has violated a previous or current order of protection will subsequently injure someone with a firearm despite the existence of a current order of protection prohibiting such conduct.

McKinney's 2007 New York Laws, Ch. 198, Senate Memorandum in Support of Senate Bill S 4066, p. 1716.

Finally, similar enforcement remedies would be enumerated in sections 240(3-d) and 252(10) of the Domestic Relations Law. While a 1999 amendment regarding matrimonial orders of protection included references to restitution, firearms license suspension and revocation, and firearms surrender, it did not delineate the additional options available to the Supreme Court upon a finding of a willful violation, *i.e.*, probation, imposition of legal and medical fees and costs, suspension of visitation or a direction that visitation be supervised, and commitment to jail. *See* Laws of 1999, ch. 606.

With increased issuance of temporary and permanent orders of protection in matrimonial proceedings resulting from the 1999 legislation, it would be helpful for the Domestic Relations Law to enumerate the specific sanctions available to Supreme Court for violations. Section 7(b) of Article 6 of the New York State Constitution accords to the Supreme Court the powers of the Family Court, thereby conferring authority upon the Supreme Court to apply the provisions in Article 8 of the Family Court Act in matrimonial proceedings. However, the explicit articulation in the Domestic Relations Law of the full range of powers of the Supreme Court with respect to violations of orders of protection and temporary orders of protection would add needed clarity to the statutory framework and would facilitate a more effective response to domestic violence incidents occurring in the context of matrimonial proceedings.

By prescribing the procedures and remedies for violations of orders of protection and by authorizing Family Court probation periods to be coextensive with the duration of family offense orders of protection, this proposal will significantly enhance the capacity of Family and Supreme Courts to provide strong civil remedies – meaningful alternatives to criminal prosecutions – for victims of domestic violence.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the domestic relations law, in relation to violations of orders of protection and temporary orders of protection and probation in family offense cases

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 430 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (d) to read as follows:

A violation of a temporary order of protection issued pursuant to this section shall be dealt with in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a, eight hundred forty-six, eight hundred forty-six-a and eight hundred forty-seven of this act; provided, however, that a violation of the order consisting of nonpayment of support governed by this article shall be dealt with in accordance with parts five and seven of this article.

§2. Section 446 of the family court act is amended by adding a final unnumbered paragraph to read as follows:

A violation of an order of protection issued pursuant to this section shall be dealt with in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a, eight hundred forty-six, eight hundred forty-six-a and eight hundred forty-seven of this act; provided, however, that a violation of the order consisting of nonpayment of support governed by this article shall be dealt with in accordance with parts five and seven of this article

§3. Section 550 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (d) to read as follows:

A violation of a temporary order of protection issued pursuant to this section shall be dealt with in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a, eight hundred forty-six, eight hundred forty-six-a and eight hundred forty-seven of this act; provided, however, that a violation of the order consisting of nonpayment of support governed by article four of this act shall be dealt with in accordance with parts five and seven of such article.

§4. Section 551 of the family court act is amended by adding a final unnumbered paragraph to read as follows:

A violation of an order of protection issued pursuant to this section shall be dealt with in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a, eight hundred forty-six, eight hundred forty-six-a and eight hundred forty-seven of this act; provided, however, that a violation of the order consisting

of nonpayment of support governed by article four of this act shall be dealt with in accordance with parts five and seven of such article.

§5. Section 655 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (e) to read as follows:

A violation of a temporary order of protection issued pursuant to this section shall be dealt with in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a, eight hundred forty-six, eight hundred forty-six-a and eight hundred forty-seven of this act.

_____§6. Section 656 of the family court act is amended by adding a final unnumbered paragraph to read as follows:

A violation of an order of protection issued pursuant to this section shall be dealt with in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a, eight hundred forty-six, eight hundred forty-six-a and eight hundred forty-seven of this act.

§7. Subdivision (c) of section 841 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 222 of the laws of 1994, is amended to read as follows:

(c) placing respondent on probation for a period not exceeding [one year], two years or, if an order of protection has been issued for five years pursuant to section eight hundred forty-two of this article, five years, and requiring respondent to participate in a batterer's education program designed to help end violent behavior, which may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling, and to pay the costs thereof if respondent has the means to do so, provided, however, that nothing contained herein shall be deemed to require payment of the costs of any such program by the petitioner, the state or any political subdivision thereof; or

§8. Paragraph (a) of subdivisions 1 and 2 and the opening paragraph and paragraph (a) of subdivision 3 of section 842-a of the family court act, as amended by chapter 597 of the laws of 1998 and chapter 635 of the laws of 1999, are amended to read as follows:

§ 842-a. Suspension and revocation of a license to carry, possess, repair or dispose of a firearm or firearms pursuant to section 400.00 of the penal law and ineligibility for such a license; order to surrender firearms.

1. Mandatory and permissive suspension of firearms license and ineligibility for such a license upon the issuance of a temporary order of protection. Whenever a temporary order of protection is

issued pursuant to section four hundred thirty, five hundred fifty, six hundred fifty-five or eight hundred twenty-eight of this article:

a) the court shall suspend any such existing license possessed by the respondent, order the respondent ineligible for such a license, and order the immediate surrender of any or all firearms owned or possessed where the court receives information that gives the court good cause to believe that: (i) the respondent has a prior conviction of any violent felony offense as defined in section 70.02 of the penal law; (ii) the respondent has previously been found to have willfully failed to obey a prior order of protection and such willful failure involved (A) the infliction of [serious] physical injury, as defined in subdivision ten of section 10.00 of the penal law, (B) the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument as those terms are defined in subdivisions twelve and thirteen of section 10.00 of the penal law, or (C) behavior constituting any violent felony offense as defined in section 70.02 of the penal law; or (iii) the respondent has a prior conviction for stalking in the first degree as defined in section 120.60 of the penal law, stalking in the second degree as defined in section 120.55 of the penal law, stalking in the third degree as defined in section 120.50 of the penal law or stalking in the fourth degree as defined in section 120.45 of such law; and

2. Mandatory and permissive revocation or suspension of firearms license and ineligibility for such a license upon the issuance of an order of protection. Whenever an order of protection is issued pursuant to section four hundred forty-six, five hundred fifty-one, six hundred fifty-six or eight hundred forty-one of this part:

(a) the court shall revoke any such existing license possessed by the respondent, order the respondent ineligible for such a license, and order the immediate surrender of any or all firearms owned or possessed where the court finds that the conduct which resulted in the issuance of the order of protection involved (i) the infliction of [serious] physical injury, as defined in subdivision ten of section 10.00 of the penal law, (ii) the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument as those terms are defined in subdivisions twelve and thirteen of section 10.00 of the penal law, or (iii) behavior constituting any violent felony offense as defined in section 70.02 of the penal law; and

3. Mandatory and permissive revocation or suspension of firearms license and ineligibility for

such a license upon a finding of a willful failure to obey an order of protection or temporary order of protection. Whenever a respondent has been found, pursuant to section eight hundred forty-six-a of this part, to have willfully failed to obey an order of protection or temporary order of protection issued by this court or [an order of protection issued] by a court of competent jurisdiction in another state, territorial or tribal jurisdiction, in addition to any other remedies available pursuant to section eight hundred forty-six-a of this part:

(a) the court shall revoke any such existing license possessed by the respondent, order the respondent ineligible for such a license, and order the immediate surrender of any or all firearms owned or possessed where the willful failure to obey such order involves (i) the infliction of [serious] physical injury, as defined in subdivision ten of section 10.00 of the penal law, (ii) the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument as those terms are defined in subdivisions twelve and thirteen of section 10.00 of the penal law, or (iii) behavior constituting any violent felony offense as defined in section 70.02 of the penal law; or (iv) behavior constituting stalking in the first degree as defined in section 120.60 of the penal law, stalking in the second degree as defined in section 120.55 of the penal law, stalking in the third degree as defined in section 120.50 of the penal law or stalking in the fourth degree as defined in section 120.45 of such law; and

§9. Section 846-a of the family court act, as amended by chapter 597 of the laws of 1998, is amended to read as follows:

§846-a. Powers on failure to obey order. If a respondent is brought before the court for failure to obey any lawful order issued under this article or an order of protection or temporary order of protection issued under this act or issued by a court of competent jurisdiction of another state, territorial or tribal jurisdiction [in a proceeding], and if, after hearing, the court is satisfied by competent proof that the respondent has willfully failed to obey [any] such order, the court [may] shall do one or more of the following:

1. modify an existing order or temporary order of protection to add reasonable conditions of behavior to the existing order [of protection,] or temporary order or make a new order of protection or temporary order of protection in accordance with section eight hundred forty-two, [may] or order the forfeiture of bail in a manner consistent with article five hundred forty of the criminal procedure law if bail has been ordered pursuant to this act[, may];

2. place the respondent on probation in accordance with subdivision (c) of section eight

hundred forty-one of this article upon such conditions as the court shall direct, which may include, but not be limited to, a direction that the respondent participate in a batterer's education program designed to help end violent behavior, which may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling, and to pay the costs thereof if the respondent has the means to do so, provided, however, that nothing in this subdivision shall be deemed to require payment of the costs of any such program by the petitioner, the state or any political subdivision thereof;

3. if the respondent is already on probation pursuant to such section, revoke such order of probation, modify the conditions of such probation and/or order any other remedy under this section, provided, however, that pending the determination of a violation of probation, the period of probation shall be tolled as of the date of filing of the violation petition or motion;

4. order the respondent to pay restitution in accordance with subdivision (e) of section eight hundred forty-one of this article or, if the respondent has already been so ordered and has violated such order, modify such order of restitution and/or order any other remedy under this section;

5. order the respondent to pay the [petitioner's] reasonable and necessary counsel fees and disbursements of any other party or parties and/or the child's attorney in connection with the violation petition [where the court finds that the violation of its order was wilful, and may];

6. order the respondent to provide, either directly or by means of medical and health insurance, for expenses incurred for medical care and treatment arising from the incident or incidents forming the basis for the issuance of the order or its violation;

7. suspend or modify an order of visitation between respondent and his or her child or children or direct that such visitation be supervised by a person or agency designated by the court and under conditions specified by the court;

8. commit the respondent to jail for a term not to exceed six months. Such commitment may be served upon certain specified days or parts of days as the court may direct, and the court may, at any time within the term of such sentence, revoke such [suspension] direction and commit the respondent for the remainder of the original sentence, or suspend the remainder of such sentence[. If the court determines that the willful failure to obey such order involves violent behavior constituting the crimes of menacing, reckless endangerment, assault or attempted assault and if such a respondent is licensed to carry, possess, repair and dispose of firearms pursuant to section 400.00 of the penal law, the court may also immediately revoke such license and may arrange for the immediate surrender and disposal of any firearm such

respondent owns or possesses. If the willful failure to obey such order involves the infliction of serious physical injury as defined in subdivision ten of section 10.00 of the penal law or the use or threatened use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument, as those terms are defined in subdivisions twelve and thirteen of section 10.00 of the penal law, such revocation and immediate surrender and disposal of any firearm owned or possessed by respondent shall be mandatory, pursuant to subdivision eleven of section 400.00 of the penal law]; and

9. in accordance with subdivision three of section eight hundred forty-two-a of this article, revoke or suspend any license of the respondent to carry, possess, repair and dispose of firearms pursuant to section 400.00 of the penal law immediately, and order the immediate surrender and disposal of any firearm such respondent owns or possesses.

§10. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 3 of section 240 of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 532 of the laws of 2008, is amended by adding two new subparagraphs 7 and 8 and subparagraphs 7 and 8 are renumbered 9 and 10 to read as follows:

(7) to require the respondent to participate in a batterer's education program designed to help end violent behavior, which may include referral to drug and alcohol counselling, and to pay the costs thereof if the person has the means to do so, provided however that nothing contained herein shall be deemed to require payment of the costs of any such program by the party or parties protected by the order, the state or any political subdivision thereof;

(8) to provide, either directly or by means of medical and health insurance, for expenses incurred for medical care and treatment arising from the incident or incidents forming the basis for the issuance of the order;

(9) to refrain from intentionally injuring or killing, without justification, any companion animal the respondent knows to be owned, possessed, leased, kept or held by the person protected by the order or a minor child residing in such person's household. "Companion animal," as used in this section, shall have the same meaning as in subdivision five of section three hundred fifty of the agriculture and markets law[.]; and

[8] (10) to observe such other conditions as are necessary to further the purposes of protection.

§11. The last two unnumbered paragraphs of subdivision 3 of section 240 of the domestic relations law, as added by chapter 606 of the laws of 1999, are amended and a new subdivision 3-d is

added to such section to read as follows:

g. Any party moving for a temporary order of protection pursuant to this subdivision during hours when the court is open shall be entitled to file such motion or pleading containing such prayer for emergency relief on the same day that such person first appears at such court, and a hearing on the motion or portion of the pleading requesting such emergency relief shall be held on the same day or the next day that the court is in session following the filing of such motion or pleading.

h. Upon issuance of an order of protection or temporary order of protection [or upon a violation of such order], the court [may] shall, where applicable, make an order in accordance with section eight hundred forty-two-a of the family court act directing the surrender of firearms, revoking or suspending a party's firearms license, and/or directing that such party be ineligible to receive a firearms license. Upon issuance of an order of protection pursuant to this section [or upon a finding of a violation thereof], the court also may direct payment of restitution in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars in accordance with subdivision (e) of section eight hundred forty-one of such act; provided, however, that in no case shall an order of restitution be issued where the court determines that the party against whom the order would be issued has already compensated the injured party or where such compensation is incorporated in a final judgment or settlement of the action. Upon a finding of a willful violation of an order of protection or temporary order of protection, the court shall make an order in accordance with subdivision three-d of this section.

3-d. If a party is brought before the court for failure to obey an order of protection or temporary order of protection issued by the court or by a court of competent jurisdiction of another state, territorial or tribal jurisdiction and if, after hearing, the court is satisfied by competent proof that such party has willfully failed to obey such order, the court shall do one or more of the following:

a. modify an existing order of protection or temporary order of protection to add reasonable conditions of behavior to the existing order or temporary order or make a new order of protection or temporary order of protection in accordance with subdivision three of this section;

b. place the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection on probation in accordance with subdivision (c) of section eight hundred forty-one of the family court act upon such conditions as the court shall direct, which may include, but not be limited to, a direction that the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection participate in a batterer's education program designed to help end violent behavior, which may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling, and to pay the costs thereof if the party has the means to do so; provided,

however, that nothing in this subdivision shall be deemed to require payment of the costs of any such program by any other party, the state or any political subdivision thereof;

c. if the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection is already on probation pursuant to such section, revoke such order of probation, modify the conditions of such probation and/or order any other remedy under this subdivision, provided, however, that pending the determination of a violation of probation, the period of probation shall be tolled as of the date of filing of the violation petition or motion;

d. order the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection to pay restitution in accordance with paragraph h of subdivision three of this section or, if such party has already been so ordered and has violated such order, modify such order and/or order any other remedy under this subdivision;

e. order the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection to pay the reasonable and necessary counsel fees and disbursements of any other party or parties and/or the child's attorney in connection with the violation petition;

f. order the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection to provide, either directly or by means of medical and health insurance, for expenses incurred for medical care and treatment arising from the incident or incidents forming the basis for the issuance of the order or its violation;

g. suspend or modify an order of visitation between the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection and his or her child or children or direct that such visitation be supervised by a person or agency designated by the court and under conditions specified by the court;

h. commit the party found to have violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection to jail for a term not to exceed six months. Such commitment may be served upon certain specified days or parts of days as the court may direct, and the court may, at any time within the term of such sentence, revoke such direction and commit such party for the remainder of the original sentence, or suspend the remainder of such sentence; and

i. in accordance with subdivision three of section eight hundred forty-two-a of the family court act, suspend or revoke any license of the party found to have violated the order to carry, possess, repair and dispose of firearms pursuant to section 400.00 of the penal law immediately, and order the immediate surrender and disposal of any firearm such respondent owns or possesses.

§12. Subdivision 1 of section 252 of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 532 of the

laws of 2008, is amended by adding two new paragraphs (g) and (h) and paragraphs (g) and (h) are relettered (i) and (j) to read as follows:

(g) to require the respondent to participate in a batterer's education program designed to help end violent behavior, which may include referral to drug and alcohol counselling, and to pay the costs thereof if the person has the means to do so, provided however that nothing contained herein shall be deemed to require payment of the costs of any such program by the party or parties protected by the order, the state or any political subdivision thereof;

(h) to provide, either directly or by means of medical and health insurance, for expenses incurred for medical care and treatment arising from the incident or incidents forming the basis for the issuance of the order;

(i) to refrain from intentionally injuring or killing, without justification, any companion animal the respondent knows to be owned, possessed, leased, kept or held by the person protected by the order or a minor child residing in such person's household. "Companion animal," as used in this section, shall have the same meaning as in subdivision five of section three hundred fifty of the agriculture and markets law[.]; and

[h] (j) to observe such other conditions as are necessary to further the purposes of protection.

§13. Subdivision 9 of section 252 of the domestic relations law, as added by chapter 606 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

9. Upon issuance of an order of protection or temporary order of protection [or upon a violation of such order], the court [may take] shall, where applicable, make an order in accordance with section eight hundred forty-two-a of the family court act directing the surrender of firearms, revoking or suspending a party's firearms license, and/or directing that such party be ineligible to receive a firearms license. Upon issuance of an order of protection pursuant to this section [or upon a finding of a violation thereof], the court also may direct payment of restitution in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars in accordance with subdivision (e) of section eight hundred forty-one of such act; provided, however, that in no case shall an order of restitution be issued where the court determines that the party against whom the order would be issued has already compensated the injured party or where such compensation is incorporated in a final judgement or settlement of the action. Upon a finding of a willful violation of an order of protection or temporary order of protection, the court shall make an order in accordance with subdivision three-d of section two hundred forty of this chapter.

§14. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law and shall apply to violations of orders of protection and temporary orders of protection committed on or after such date.

8. Restoration of parental rights
(F.C.A. §635, 636, 637, 1089; S.S.L. §384-b(13))

New York State has progressed far from the days when adolescents were not deemed candidates for either meaningful permanency planning, foster care or adoption, and when many were simply relegated to congregate care settings from which, when they reached the age of 18, the teens were released to “independent living,” an unrealistic status that for too many meant homelessness. Permanency legislation, enacted as Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, reflected a recognition that teens in out-of-home care require services to start preparing them for independence in adulthood starting at age 14. It also recognized that if they are neither living with their own families, nor adopted, they need to have a “significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child.” See Family Court Act §1089. Not infrequently, the “significant connection” that would fulfill the teen’s best interests turns out to be his or her birth parent, even if parental rights had been terminated. Nonetheless, State law does not provide any procedural vehicle to recognize that reality.

To fill this gap, the Committee is recommending that a provision be added to the termination of parental rights statutes to authorize the Family Court, in narrowly defined circumstances, to restore birth parents’ parental rights. The proposal is similar to legislation enacted in California in 2005 (Chapter 634; Assembly Bill 519)³⁷ and Washington in 2007 [Laws of 2007, ch. 413]. Under the proposal, a petition to restore parental rights could be filed upon the consent of the petitioner and respondent in the original termination of parental rights proceeding, as well as that of the child. The original petitioner’s failure to consent would not be a bar to granting the petition if the consent were unreasonably withheld. The order transferring guardianship and custody of the child must have been issued two or more years prior to the filing of the restoration petition, and the original adjudication terminating parental rights could not have been based upon severe or repeated child abuse. The child would need to be 14 years of age or older to remain under the jurisdiction of the Family Court and to have a permanency goal other than adoption. The Family Court would be authorized to grant the restoration petition where clear and convincing proof established that the restoration of parental rights would be in the child’s best interests. The restoration would, in effect, revoke the disposition transferring guardianship and custody of the child but would leave in place the fact-finding upon which the termination of parental rights adjudication had been based. A clause would also be added to the permanency hearing order provision permitting the Court to recommend the filing of a petition to restore parental rights.

Significantly, the proposal would add an important option available under the Washington State statute, *i.e.*, that the Court would have the authority to grant the restoration petition conditionally. This option would retain guardianship and custody of the child with the agency but authorize the child to reside with the birth parent on a trial discharge for a period of up to six months, during which time the agency may be directed to supervise the family and to develop a reunification plan with appropriate transitional services. If the temporary restoration proves successful and in the

³⁷ During the first two years since the California statute became effective in January, 2006, fourteen parents have had parental rights restored, according to the Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles. See K. Hurley, “When You Can’t Go Home: Should Teens Have Means to Regain Legal Ties to their Parents?,” 15 *Child Welfare Watch* 18, 20 (Winter, 2008).

child's best interests, it would be made final at the conclusion of the designated period and guardianship and custody would be transferred at that time to the birth parent. If, however, the child were removed from the birth parent during the designated period by reason of abuse or neglect, the Court would be authorized to dismiss the restoration petition and direct the agency that retains guardianship and custody to make efforts to further an alternative permanency plan for the child.

Even without a statute, child welfare professionals in New York have reported cases in which facts mirroring the criteria contained in the Committee's proposal have spurred all parties and the adolescents themselves to prevail upon the Family Court to vacate orders terminating parental rights. See D. Riggs, "Permanence Can Mean Going Home," *Adoptalk* (North American Council on Adoptable Children; Spring, 2006). In fact, the guidelines for adolescent cases issued by the New York City Administration for Children's Services in 2003 recognize that "the best permanency resource for a young person who has been freed for adoption may be a member of the child's birth family, including a parent from whom the child has been freed."³⁸ Judges have reported that, notwithstanding termination of parental rights, teens aging out of foster care often return to their birth families, and, as one child welfare professional was quoted as saying:

The way families are drawn together against all odds whatever the circumstances I think is exemplified by just how many kids do we see aging out of the foster care system and where do they go? They go home. ...even kids whose parents' rights have been terminated...

The bonds that hold families together are powerful and often the system works to strain or shatter or destroy them rather than build on them.

M. Freundlich, *Time Running Out: Teens in Foster Care* (Children's Rights, Legal Aid Society Juvenile Rights Division & Lawyers for Children, Nov., 2003), p. 67. As one commentator noted, "It is never too late for reunification." J. Jensen, "Fostering Interdependence: A Family-Centered Approach to Help Youth Aging Out of Foster Care," 3 *Whittier J. of Child and Family Advocacy* 329 (Spring, 2004).

Although several Family Court judges in New York State have vacated termination of parental rights orders upon consent, no clear procedural vehicle authorizes them to do so. In Matter of Rasheed A., *NY Law Journal*, Aug. 3, 2007 (Fam. Ct., Kings Co., 2007), a Family Court referee awarded guardianship of a severely hyperactive 12-year old child to a birth mother, whose rights had been terminated, on the basis of "unusual and compelling circumstances." The mother demonstrated that the problems precipitating termination of her parental rights had been resolved and she proved by "substantial evidence" that the child would suffer serious harm if the mother were not awarded custody or guardianship.³⁹ Further, in Matter of Theresa O. v. Arthur P., 11 Misc.3d 736

³⁸ N.Y.C. Admin. for Children's Services, "Implementation of the *Adoption and Safe Families Act*, Part V: Family-based Concurrent Planning for Youth with Goals of Independent Living" (2003)(on-line at www.nyc.gov/html/acs/pdf/asfa_5.pdf). See also, A. Lowe, "Families for Teens Overview," *Eighth Annual Children's Law Institute* 197, 199 (Practicing Law Institute, 2005).

³⁹ See also K. Hurley, *supra*, at 20-21.

(Fam. Ct., Ulster Co., 2006), the Family Court afforded standing to a birth mother to seek custody and eventual adoption of her child, notwithstanding her earlier surrender. The Court rejected the argument that the doctrine of *res judicata* precluded re-litigation of the child’s custody, quoting Friederwitzer v. Friederwitzer, 55 N.Y.2d 89(1982):

The only absolute in the law governing custody of children is that there are no absolutes.

However, in Matter of Tiffany A. v. Margaret H., 171 Misc.2d 786, 656 N.Y.S.2d 792 (Fam. Ct., Kings Co., 1996), the Family Court denied standing to a birth parent, whose rights had been terminated, to seek custody of her child. Moreover, in Matter of Frederick S., 178 Misc.2d 152 (Fam. Ct., Kings Co., 1998), the Family Court noted that neither the Family Court Act, nor the Social Services Law, contain a provision permitting the Court to set aside or vacate an order terminating parental rights and that the authority contained in section 5015 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules must be utilized “sparingly” and only in the most “compelling” circumstances. A 14-year-old child’s change of heart regarding adoption by his aunt did not, in the Court’s view, constitute such circumstances, although the child’s consent would be needed for an adoption to be approved. At the same time, there is considerable appellate authority in New York State for ordering new dispositional hearings in termination of parental rights cases when it becomes clear that the child is older and does not want to be adopted, as well as a few cases in which the birth parent had made progress and the child pressed for reunification.⁴⁰

Recognizing that no legal pathway exists to restore the family ties of the State’s “legal orphans” – youth whose parental ties were terminated but who have no prospect of adoption – a recent report of the Center for an Urban Future included support for the Committee’s proposal as one of its recommendations.⁴¹ Clearly the legislative vacuum must be filled so that the Courts will have specific authority to fulfill their statutory duty to find permanent homes for children, including authority in prescribed circumstances to restore parental rights.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the social services law, in relation to restoration of parental rights

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Article 6 of the family court act is amended by adding a new part 1-A to read as

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Matter of Kayshawn Raheim E., 86 A.D.3d 471 (2nd Dept., 2008); Matter of Londel Chavis C., 41 A.D.3d 843 (2nd Dept., 2007); Matter of Emma L., 35 A.D.3d 250 (1st Dept., 2006), *lve. app. denied*, 8 N.Y.3d 904 (2007); Matter of Anna Maria G., 29 A.D.3d 992 (2d Dept., 2006); Matter of Eugene L., 22 A.D.3d 348 (1st Dept., 2005), *lve. app. denied in part and dismissed in part*, 6 N.Y.3d 715 (2006); Matter of Marc David D., 20 A.D.3d 565 (2nd Dept., 2005).

⁴¹ “Child Welfare Watch Recommendations and Solutions,” 15 *Child Welfare Watch* 3,4 (Winter, 2008).

follows:

Part 1-A. Modification of disposition; restoration of parental rights.

§635. Petition to restore parental rights. A petition to modify a disposition ordered pursuant to subdivision (c) of section six hundred thirty-one of this article or paragraph (a) of subdivision three of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law in order to restore parental rights may be filed in accordance with this part where the following conditions are met:

(a) the order committing guardianship and custody of the child had been issued two or more years prior to the date of filing of the petition under this section; and

(b) the order committing guardianship and custody of the child had been based upon an adjudication upon grounds enumerated in paragraphs (b), (c) or (d) of subdivision four of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law; and

(c) the petition alleges that petitioner or petitioners and respondent or respondents in the proceeding in which guardianship and custody had been committed consent to the relief requested in the petition or that the petitioner or petitioners withheld consent to the relief requested in the petition without good cause; and

(d) the child is fourteen years of age or older, remains under the jurisdiction of the family court, has not been adopted, does not have a permanency goal of adoption and consents to the relief requested in the petition.

§636. Originating a proceeding to restore parental rights; service and venue.

(a) A proceeding to modify the disposition in order to restore parental rights may be originated by the filing of a petition by the child's attorney, by the agency or individual to whom guardianship and custody of the child had been committed or by the respondent or respondents in the termination of parental rights proceeding. The petition shall be served upon the child's attorney, the agency or individual to whom guardianship and custody of the child had been committed and the respondent or respondents in the termination of parental rights proceeding, as well as the attorney or attorneys who represented the respondent or respondents in the termination of parental rights proceeding. A certified copy of the order committing guardianship and custody shall be attached to the petition.

(b) Upon the filing of a petition under this part, the court may cause a summons to be issued to the child, the agency or individual to whom guardianship and custody of the child had been

committed and the respondent or respondents in the termination of parental rights proceeding. The summons shall be served in accordance with section six hundred seventeen of this article, accompanied by a copy of the petition and the certified order of commitment sought to be modified.

(c) The petition shall be filed before the court that exercised jurisdiction over the most recent permanency proceeding involving the child and shall be assigned, wherever practicable, to the family court judge who presided over that proceeding or the proceeding to terminate parental rights.

(d) Wherever practicable, the child shall be represented by the same attorney that represented the child in the most recent permanency proceeding and the parent or parents shall be represented by the same attorney or attorneys who represented the parent or parents in the termination of parental rights proceeding. Where this is not practicable, or where the court grants a request by the attorney or attorneys to be relieved, the court shall immediately assign a new attorney or attorneys, as applicable.

§637. Burden of proof, disposition and findings.

(a) The petitioner shall have the burden of proof by clear and convincing evidence that restoration of parental rights is in the child's best interests, that the requirements of section six hundred thirty-five of this article have been met, and that all of the parties and the child have consented or, if the petitioner in the proceeding in which guardianship and custody have been committed failed to consent to the relief requested, that such failure was without good cause.

(b) The court shall state on the record the reason or reasons for its disposition of the petition. The court may make the following orders of disposition:

(i) The court may grant the petition, modify the order of disposition previously entered in the termination of parental rights proceeding and transfer guardianship and custody of the child to the birth parent or parents, provided, however, that the findings of fact rendered pursuant to section six hundred twenty-two of this article or subdivision four of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law that formed the basis for the adjudication terminating parental rights shall remain; or

(ii) The court may dismiss the petition, in which case the commitment of guardianship and custody of the child to the authorized agency or individual shall continue and a permanency hearing shall be required to be held as scheduled in accordance with article ten-A of this act; or

(iii) The court may grant the petition conditionally for a designated period of up to six

months, during which time guardianship and custody of the child shall remain with the local social services district or authorized agency while the child may visit with, or be placed on a trial discharge with, the birth parent or parents. The court shall direct the district or agency to supervise the child's birth parent or parents, develop a reunification plan and provide appropriate transitional services to the child and birth parent or parents and report to the parties, attorney for the child and the court not later than thirty days prior to the expiration of the designated period. The court shall schedule the proceeding to be heard prior to the expiration of the designated period and shall determine whether to grant the petition permanently in accordance with paragraph (i) of this subdivision or dismiss the petition in accordance with paragraph (ii) of this subdivision. The court shall state the reasons for its determination. If the petition is permanently granted, the child's custody and guardianship shall be transferred to the birth parent or parents. If the child has been removed from the custody of the birth parent or parents prior to the expiration of the designated period by reason of a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, the court shall schedule the proceeding to be heard on notice to the parties and attorney for the child, may terminate the trial discharge and may dismiss the petition in accordance with paragraph (ii) of this subdivision.

§2. Item (III) of clause B of subparagraph (viii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act, as added by section 27 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended and a new item (IV) is added to such clause to read as follows:

(III) recommend that the office of children and family services investigate the facts and circumstances concerning the discharge of responsibilities for the care and welfare of such child by a local social services district pursuant to section three hundred ninety-five of the social services law; and.

(IV) recommend that the attorney for the child, local social services district or agency file a petition pursuant to part 1-A of article six of this act to restore the parental rights of a child who has been freed for adoption.

§3. The title of section 384-b of the social services law, as added by chapter 666 of the laws of 1976, is amended and a new subdivision 13 is added to such section to read as follows:

Guardianship and custody of destitute or dependent children; commitment by court order; modification of commitment and restoration of parental rights.

13. A petition to modify a disposition of commitment of guardianship and custody in order

to restore parental rights may be brought in accordance with part one-A of article six of the family court act where the conditions enumerated in section six hundred thirty-five of such act have been met.

§4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

9. Orders of protection in termination of parental rights proceedings, child protective proceedings and permanency hearings regarding children freed for adoption (F.C.A. §§634, 1029; 1056, 1089; S.S.L. §384-b; Exec. L. §221-a)

In most cases, the conclusion of a termination of parental rights proceeding marks the beginning of a new phase for a child in foster care, a significant step toward a stable, permanent home, most often through adoption. Sometimes, particularly in the case of kinship adoptions or mediated agreements, permanency is achieved with the understanding, agreed upon by everyone involved, that some contact should continue with the child's birth family and that such contact would be in the child's best interests. However, in some instances, continuing contact with the birth family would endanger the child and destabilize his or her new family. Indeed, in rare cases, stalking behavior by disturbed birth parents has posed a serious impediment to the adoption of their children, has caused prospective adoptive parents to become ambivalent about whether to finalize the adoptions and has caused serious upset and harm to the children themselves. Unfortunately, since prospective adoptive or foster parents do not meet the definition of family contained in Article 8 of the Family Court Act, the current statutory structure provides no vehicle to protect children and their new families short of a criminal prosecution for a non-family offense.

An additional problem confronting victims of family violence, both adults and children, in child protective cases is the heavy burden created by the extremely short duration of orders of protection against family members, a period far shorter than applicable periods for orders in family offense, custody, visitation, child support and paternity proceedings. Subdivision one of 1056 of the Family Court Act authorizes an order of protection against respondent parents, persons legally responsible for a child's care and such persons' spouses in child neglect and abuse proceedings to last only as long as a child protective dispositional order. See Matter of Patricia B., 61 A.D.3d 861 (2d Dept., 2009); Matter of Andrew Y., 44 A.D.3d 1063 (2d Dept., 2007); Matter of Candace S., 38 A.D.3d 786 (2d Dept., 2007), *lve. app. denied*, 9 N.Y.3d 805 (2007); Matter of Amanda WW., 43 A.D.3d 1256 (3rd Dept., 2007); Matter of Collin H., 28 A.D.3d 806 (3rd Dept., 2006). Dispositions in child protective cases include, *inter alia*, release of a child under supervision for one year, subject to a one-year extension, or placement of a child until the next permanency hearing. Permanency hearings must be convened for children in foster care, as well as children directly placed with relatives and other individuals, once they have been in care for eight months and then every six months thereafter. See Family Court Act §§1052, 1054, 1055, 1057, 1089. These time limits stand in sharp contrast to the duration limits of family offense orders of protection, which were extended by the Legislature in 2003 to up to two years or, if aggravating circumstances or a violation of an order of protection are found, up to five years. See Family Court Act §842 [Laws of 2003, ch. 579]. Orders of protection in custody, visitation and other civil proceedings in Supreme and Family Court may last for specified periods until the youngest child reaches majority.

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing a measure to create a Family Court remedy for these deficiencies. First, the proposal would amend the termination of parental rights and permanent neglect statutes, Family Court Act §634 and Social Services Law §384-b, to add authority for the Family Court, for good cause after giving the birth parent notice and an opportunity to be heard, to issue an order of protection in conjunction with an order of disposition

committing guardianship and custody of the child. The order of protection may, among other conditions, prohibit the birth parent from contact with the child and the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent and may last for a period of up to five years or the date on which the youngest child turns eighteen, whichever is earlier. Second, the proposal would amend Family Court Act §1089 to authorize such an order to be issued as part of the disposition of a permanency hearing. Third, the proposal would amend Family Court Act §1056 to add a condition to orders of protection in child protective proceedings requiring the respondent to stay away, *inter alia*, from a "person with whom the child has been paroled, remanded, placed or released by the court..."

That children and their new families are sometimes in critical need of these protections is clear from experience in numerous cases. The Family Courts have had cases in which disturbed birth parents, whose rights had been terminated, have contacted children at their schools, followed children home from school, accosted children when playing outside their homes, called them repeatedly on their cell-phones and scared them at home upon having a third party knock on their door on a pretext. While not frequent, such instances cry out for legal remedies. Families in such situations should not be forced to pursue criminal prosecutions as their only means of obtaining relief to keep their children and families safe.

Fourth, similar to orders of protection in family offense cases, orders of protection issued in child protective proceedings against individuals who are related by blood or marriage to the child or who were members of the child's household at the time of the disposition would be authorized to last up to two years or, or, upon findings of aggravating circumstances or a violation of an order of protection, up to five years. Such orders could be extended upon judicial review, with notice to all affected parties, in the context of a permanency hearing under Article 10-A of the Family Court Act or other post-dispositional proceeding under Article 10. The duration of orders against non-parents and former members of the household, pursuant to subdivision four of section 1056 of the Family Court Act would be unchanged, but the proposal would explicitly permit the restrained party to return to court for modification or vacatur of the order of protection upon a showing of a substantial change of circumstances. Concomitantly, orders of protection in permanent neglect and other termination of parental rights proceedings would be authorized for periods of up to five years. These provisions for time-limited orders would, therefore, meet the criticisms voiced by the Court of Appeals in Matter of Sheena D., 8 N.Y.3d 136 (2007), regarding lengthy orders of protection not subject to judicial scrutiny.

Finally, to optimize their effectiveness, the proposal would require all of these orders of protection to be entered onto the statewide registry of orders of protection and warrants. The registry, established pursuant to the *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act of 1994* [Laws of 1994, ch. 222, 224], has become an invaluable tool both for law enforcement and the courts. With well over two million orders of protection in the database,⁴² and with the database connected to the comprehensive national "Protection Order File" maintained by the National Crime Information Center (Federal Bureau of Investigation), the registry helps to assure informed judgments at all stages of domestic violence cases. Significantly, legislation enacted in 2008 and amended in 2009 requires the registry to be checked in all Family and Supreme Court cases of child custody and

⁴² Source: NYS Office of Court Administration Division of Technology.

visitation, thus making the registry a critically important resource in these cases as well. *See* Laws of 2008, ch. 595; Laws of 2009, ch. 295. All orders, including those in child protective, permanency, permanent neglect and other termination of parental rights proceedings, must be entered onto the registry in order for it to provide the protection necessary for all victims of family violence. Law enforcement and courts need to have confidence in the completeness and accuracy of the responses to their inquiries regarding both the existence of outstanding orders, including possibly conflicting orders, and the parties' histories of orders of protection.

The importance of inclusion of these orders on the registry cannot be overemphasized. Domestic violence is often inextricably linked with child abuse and victims of domestic violence in child abuse and neglect cases, including victims who may be respondents in these proceedings, require as much protection from their abusers as in other proceedings.⁴³ If a child neglect proceeding is brought against the abuser, the order of protection issued to protect both the abuse victim and the children should provide as much protection as orders of protection issued in family offense and all other cases – a precept that compels inclusion of the order on the statewide domestic violence registry and, consequently, on the Federal “Protection Order File” as well. That domestic violence and child abuse frequently coexist in homes has been widely recognized, with estimates of the overlap ranging from 40% to 60%.⁴⁴ Research has estimated that children are abused at a rate 1,500 times higher than the national average in homes where domestic violence is also present.⁴⁵ Significantly, child sexual abuse has also been closely correlated with domestic violence.⁴⁶ Therefore, inclusion of orders of protection in such cases on the registry will significantly advance the Legislature's goal of providing an integrated response in all family violence cases and of protecting all victims of domestic abuse, both parents and children, from suffering further violence.

Enactment of this proposal would fill significant gaps in the current statutory framework governing child welfare cases and would further the fundamental precept underlying the Federal and New York State *Adoption and Safe Families Acts*, *i.e.*, that “the health and safety of children is of

⁴³ Victims of domestic violence may not be charged with child neglect by reason of their children's exposure to domestic violence, unless they have failed to exercise a minimum degree of care and unless the child is thereby placed in imminent risk of impairment. *Nicholson v. Scopetta*, 3 N.Y.3d 357 (2004). However, there are respondents in neglect and abuse proceedings, who are themselves also victims of family offenses, who should be able to obtain protection for themselves and their children without the burden of initiating separate family offense proceedings in order to obtain this relief.

⁴⁴ *See* "The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children: A Report to the President of the American Bar Association" (Amer. Bar Assoc., 1994), p. 18; "Diagnostic and Treatment Guidelines on Domestic Violence" (Amer. Medical Assoc., 1992). *See also* M. Fields, "The Impact of Spouse Abuse on Children, and its Relevance in Custody and Visitation Decisions in New York State," 3 *Cornell J. of Law and Pub. Policy* 222, 224 (1994); A. Jones, *Next Time She'll be Dead* 84 (1994) [citing, E. Stark and A. Flitcraft, "Women and Children at Risk: A Feminist Perspective on Child Abuse," 18 *Int'l. J. Health Services* 1:97 (1988); L. McKibben, *et al.*, "Victimization of Mothers of Abused Children: A Controlled Study," 84 *Pediatrics* #3 (1989); L. Walker, *The Battered Woman Syndrome* 59 (1984)].

⁴⁵ "The Violence Against Women Act of 1990: Hearings on S. 2754," Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Report 1-545, 101st Cong., 2d Sess. 37 (1990)[cited in J. Zorza, "Woman Battering: A Major Cause of Homelessness," *Clearinghouse Review* (Special Issue, 1991)].

⁴⁶ L. Hoff, *Battered Women as Survivors* 240 (1990); M. Roy, *Children in the Crossfire* 89-90 (1988); Hewitt and Friedrich, "Effects of Probable Sexual Abuse on Preschool Children," in M.Q. Patton, ed., *Family Sexual Abuse* 59-74 (1991) [cited in J. Zorza, *supra*, at 424-425].

paramount importance.” See Social Services Law §384-b(1); 42 U.S.C. §§629b(a)(9), 670, 671(a).

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, the social services law and the executive law, in relation to orders of protection in termination of parental rights proceedings, child protective proceedings and permanency hearings regarding children freed for adoption

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 634 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 666 of the laws of 1976, is amended to read as follows:

§634. Commitment of guardianship and custody; further orders. The court may enter an order under section six hundred thirty-one committing the guardianship and custody of the child to the petitioner on such conditions, if any, as it deems proper. For good cause shown, the court may issue a temporary order of protection or, upon disposition, an order of protection to protect the child and the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents and other designated members of the household in which the child resides. The order may direct the respondent to observe reasonable conditions that may include, among others, that the respondent stay away from the child and from the home, school, business or place of employment of the child or the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents or other designated members of the household in which the child resides. Prior to issuing the order, the court shall inquire as to the existence of any other orders of protection involving the parties and shall give the respondent notice and an opportunity to be heard. The court shall state its reasons on the record for issuing the order. An order of protection issued under this section may remain in effect for a period of up to five years or until the youngest child reaches the age of eighteen years of age, whichever is earlier. A violation of an order issued under this section may be addressed in accordance with subdivision two of section one thousand seventy-two of this chapter.

§2. Subdivision (a) of section 1029 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 673 of the laws of 1988, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The family court, upon the application of any person who may originate a proceeding under this article, for good cause shown, may issue a temporary order of protection, before or after

the filing of such petition, which may contain any of the provisions authorized on the making of an order of protection under section [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-six of this article and must conform to all of the requirements of that section. Prior to issuing a temporary order of protection under this section, the court shall inquire as to the existence of any other orders of protection involving the parties. If such order is granted before the filing of a petition and a petition is not filed under this article within ten days from the granting of such order, the order shall be vacated. In any case where a petition has been filed and [a law guardian] an attorney for the child appointed, such [law guardian] attorney may make application for a temporary order of protection pursuant to the provisions of this section.

§3. The opening unlettered paragraph and paragraph (a) of subdivision 1, subdivisions 2 and 4 of section 1056 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 483 of the laws of 1995, are amended to read as follows:

1. The court may [make] issue an order of protection in assistance or as a condition of any other order made under this part. [Such] Prior to issuing an order of protection under this section, the court shall inquire as to the existence of any other orders of protection involving the parties. An order of protection [shall] issued under this section may remain in effect [concurrently with, shall expire no later than the expiration date of, and] for a period of up to two years or, if the court finds aggravating circumstances as defined in paragraph (vii) of subdivision (a) of section eight hundred twenty-seven of this act or if the court finds that the respondent has violated an order of protection, a period of up to five years. The order of protection may be extended concurrently with, [such other] another order [made] issued under this [part] article or Article ten-A of this act, except as provided in subdivision four of this section. The order of protection may set forth reasonable conditions of behavior to be observed for a specified time by a person who is before the court and is a parent or a person legally responsible for the child's care or the spouse of the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care, or both. Such an order may require any such person:

(a) to stay away from the home, school, business or place of employment of the other spouse, parent or person legally responsible for the child's care, person with whom the child has been paroled, remanded, placed or released by the court or the child, and to stay away from any other specific location designated by the court;

2. [The] Where the court [may also] has determined, in accordance with the requirements of

section one thousand seventeen, part two or, as applicable, sections one thousand fifty-two and one thousand fifty-five of this article, to award custody of the child, during the term of the temporary order of protection or order of protection, as applicable, to [either] a suitable non-respondent parent[,] or [to an] other appropriate relative [within the second degree] or suitable person, this award of custody may be included in the order of protection or temporary order of protection, as applicable. Nothing in this section gives the court power to place or board out any child or to commit a child to an institution or agency. In making orders of protection, the court shall so act as to insure that in the care, protection, discipline and guardianship of the child his or her religious faith shall be preserved and protected.

4. The court may enter an order of protection independently of any other order made under this part, against a person who was a member of the child's household or a person legally responsible for the child's care as defined in section one thousand twelve of this [chapter] article, and who is no longer a member of such household at the time of the disposition and who is not related by blood or marriage to the child or a member of the child's household. An order of protection entered pursuant to this subdivision may be for any period of time up to the child's eighteenth birthday and upon such conditions as [the court deems necessary and proper to protect the health and safety of the child and the child's caretaker] are authorized by subdivision one of this section. The person restrained by the order of protection may, upon a showing of a substantial change of circumstances, move for modification or vacatur of the order.

_____ § 4. Section 1072 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

§1072. Failure to comply with terms and conditions of supervision or order of protection.
1. If, prior to the expiration of the period of an order of supervision pursuant to section one thousand fifty-four or one thousand fifty-seven of this article, a motion or order to show cause is filed that alleges that a parent or other person legally responsible for a child's care violated the terms and conditions of an order of supervision issued under section one thousand fifty-four or one thousand fifty-seven of this article, the period of the order of supervision shall be tolled pending disposition of the motion or order to show cause. If, after hearing, the court is satisfied by competent proof that the parent or other person violated the order of supervision willfully and without just cause, the court may:

(a) revoke the order of supervision [or of protection] and enter any order that might have been made at the time the order of supervision or of protection was made, or

(b) commit the parent or other person who willfully and without just cause violated the order to jail for a term not to exceed six months.

2. Prior to the expiration of the period of an order of protection or temporary order of protection issued pursuant to section six hundred thirty-four, one thousand twenty-nine, one thousand fifty-six or one thousand eighty-nine of this article or subdivision thirteen of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, a motion or order to show cause may be filed that alleges that a parent or other person legally responsible for a child's care violated the terms and conditions of such order willfully and without just cause. If, after hearing, the court is satisfied by competent proof that the parent or other person violated the order of protection or temporary order of protection willfully and without just cause, the court may:

(a) revoke or modify the order of protection or temporary order of protection and enter any order that might have been made at the time such order had been issued, or

(b) issue an order in accordance with sections eight hundred forty-two-a or eight hundred forty-six-a of this act.

_____§5. Clause (D) of subparagraph (viii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court, as added by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

D. [The] In the case of a child who has not been freed for adoption, the court may make an order of protection in the manner specified by section one thousand fifty-six of this [act] chapter in assistance or as a condition of any other order made under this section. The order of protection may set forth reasonable conditions of behavior to be observed for a specified period of time by a person before the court for the protection of the child and the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents and other designated members of the household in which the child resides. Prior to issuing an order of protection under this section, the court shall inquire as to the existence of any other orders of protection involving the parties and the child. In the case of a child freed for adoption, the court, for good cause shown, may issue an order of protection directing a person whose parental rights had been terminated or surrendered to observe reasonable conditions enumerated therein in order to protect the child and the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents and other designated members of the household in which the child resides. The conditions may include, among others,

that such person shall stay away from the child and from the home, school, business or place of employment of the child or the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents or other designated members of the household in which the child resides. The order may only be issued after the person or persons restrained by the order have been given notice and an opportunity to be heard. The court shall state its reasons on the record for issuing the order. In the case of a child freed for adoption or for whom a termination of parental rights proceeding is pending, the court may issue an order of protection or temporary order of protection, as applicable, in accordance with subdivision thirteen of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law. A violation of an order issued under this section may be addressed in accordance with subdivision two of section one thousand seventy-two of this chapter.

§6. Section 384-b of the social services law is amended by adding a new subdivision 13 to read as follows:

13. For good cause shown, the court may issue a temporary order of protection or, upon disposition, an order of protection to protect the child and the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents and other designated members of the household in which the child resides. The order may direct the respondent to observe reasonable conditions that may include, among others, that the respondent stay away from the child and from the home, school, business or place of employment of the child or the child's foster or pre-adoptive parent or parents or other designated members of the household in which the child resides. Prior to issuing the order, the court shall inquire as to the existence of any other orders of protection involving the parties and shall give the respondent notice and an opportunity to be heard. The court shall state its reasons on the record for issuing the order. An order of protection issued under this section may remain in effect for a period of up to five years or until the youngest child reaches the age of eighteen years of age, whichever is earlier. A violation of an order issued under this section may be addressed in accordance with subdivision two of section one thousand seventy-two of the family court act.

§7. Subdivision 1 of section 221-a of the executive law, as amended by chapter 462 of the laws of 2002, is amended to read as follows:

1. The superintendent, in consultation with the division of criminal justice services, office of court administration, the division of probation and correctional alternatives, the state office for the prevention of domestic violence and the division for women, shall develop a comprehensive plan for

the establishment and maintenance of a statewide computerized registry of all orders of protection issued pursuant to articles four, five, six [and], eight, ten and ten-a of the family court act, section 384-b of the social services law, section 530.12 of the criminal procedure law and, insofar as they involve victims of domestic violence as defined by section four hundred fifty-nine-a of the social services law, section 530.13 of the criminal procedure law and sections two hundred forty and two hundred fifty-two of the domestic relations law, and orders of protection issued by courts of competent jurisdiction in another state, territorial or tribal jurisdiction, and all warrants issued pursuant to sections one hundred fifty-three and eight hundred twenty-seven of the family court act, and arrest and bench warrants as defined in subdivisions twenty-eight, twenty-nine and thirty of section 1.20 of the criminal procedure law, insofar as such warrants pertain to orders of protection; provided, however, that warrants issued pursuant to section one hundred fifty-three of the family court act pertaining to articles three[,] and seven [and ten] of such act and section 530.10 of the criminal procedure law shall not be included in the registry. The superintendent shall establish and maintain such registry for the purposes of ascertaining the existence of orders of protection, temporary orders of protection and warrants and for enforcing the provisions of paragraph (b) of subdivision four of section 140.10 of the criminal procedure law.

§8. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

10. Substitution of the term “attorney for the child” for “law guardian” (CPLR §1101(e); D.R.L. §§75-f, 76-f, 112-b, 113, 115-b, 240, 254; Exec.L. §§503, 508; Jud.L. §§35(7), 35-a; F.C.A. §§154, 154-b, 154-c, 241, 242, 243, 245, 248, 249, 249-a, 249-b, 251, 301.2, 306.2, 307.4, 320.2, 320.3, 320.4, 322.2, 330.1, 331.1, 332.2, 341.2, 353.3, 354.2, 365.3, 375.1, 435, 625, 633, 651, 728, 741, 750, 760, 835, 1016, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1033-b, 1036, 1038, 1038-a, 1039, 1039-a, 1042, 1048, 1051, 1052-a, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1055-a, 1055-b, 1057, 1058, 1063, 1073, 1075, 1081, 1082, 1085, 1088, 1089, 1089-a, 1090, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1118, 1120, 1121; Pub. Health L. §§2306, 2782; Soc. Serv. L. §§358-a(6), 372, 383-c, 384, 384-a, 384-b, 409-e, 409-f, 422(4))

Following numerous statewide hearings and extensive research, in February, 2006, the Matrimonial Commission, which was appointed by former Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye and chaired by former Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department Judge Sondra Miller, issued its comprehensive report. The Commission recommended, *inter alia*, that the title “law guardian” be replaced by “attorney for the child,” which it characterized as a “necessary language change that more accurately reflects the attorney’s role:”

[F]rom the testimony at the hearings and the written submissions received, it is clear that there exists a misconception that a law guardian plays a neutral role in these adversarial proceedings. ...

The attorney for the child is not a mental health professional, a mediator, a fiduciary or, most importantly, an arm of the court. ...

The Commission reiterates that at all times during the proceeding, the attorney for the child is subject to the same rules of good lawyering and professional responsibility applicable to any attorney in a civil proceeding or action, and must represent the client within those bounds.

Report of the Matrimonial Commission (Feb., 2006), at pps. 17, 18, 40.

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has joined with the Statewide Advisory Committee on Attorneys for Children in recommending that the Legislature adopt the Commission’s long-overdue change. The proposal would amend the Civil Practice Law and Rules, the Executive Law, the Judiciary Law, the Family Court Act, the Public Health Law and the Social Services Law to substitute “attorney” or “counsel” for “law guardian.” With respect to the appointment of attorneys for children in voluntary foster care placement proceedings, it would correct a decade-old error. Although Family Court Act §249 was amended in 1999 to require such appointments and such appointments have become routine, the references in section 358-a of the Social Services Law to these appointments as discretionary were never changed. *See* Laws of 1999, ch. 506.

New York State’s tradition of affording legal representation to children in a variety of proceedings is long-standing and nationally recognized. Its Family Court Act, enacted in 1962, was cited by the United States Supreme Court in its seminal decision in *Matter of Gault*, 387 U.S. 1

(1967), which required counsel in juvenile delinquency proceedings and equated its role with counsel in criminal cases. However, almost from its inception, the ambiguous term "law guardian," although defined in Family Court Act §242 as an attorney, has created debate and confusion. It suggests a role that combines attributes of the attorney-advocate with those of a guardian *ad litem*, functions that are inherently incompatible. This ambiguity has fostered uncertainty not only among children's lawyers but also among other participants in family law proceedings, including judges, parents, and parents' attorneys, on such fundamental issues as attorney-client confidentiality, *ex parte* communications and the impact of the child's preferences on litigation goals. The result has all too often been misunderstanding and clashing expectations about the actions and intentions of the child's lawyer, adding needless complexity and confusion to cases involving children.

Consistent with both Rule 7.2 of the *Rules of the Chief Judge* [22 NYCRR §7.2] and the NYS Bar Association standards for the representation of children,⁴⁷ this change in language is long overdue. In fact, in removing an appellate attorney for failing to consult with his 11 year old client, the Appellate Division, Third Dept., in its decision in Mark T. v. Joyanna U., 64 A.D.3d 1092 (3rd Dept., 2009), recently emphasized that client-informed advocacy, rather than guardian-type judgments in the abstract about a child client's best interests without consultation, must be the linchpin of representation. *See also* Van Dee v. Bean, 66 A.D.3d 1'253 (3rd Dept., 2009). Clearly the terminology used to label the child's attorney should match the court's (and the court rule's) definition of the attorney's role. The term "law guardian" confuses the attorney's role; "attorney for the child" defines it.

In proposing this important language change, the Committees are continuing a practice already begun by the Legislature. Chapters 473 and 476 of the Laws of 2009, Chapter 626 of the Laws of 2007 and Chapter 576 of the Laws of 2008, for example, use the term "attorney for the child." Further, shortly after the Matrimonial Commission report, Rule 7.2 of the *Rules of the Chief Judge* was promulgated, which also used the term "attorney for the child" and clarified the role as unquestionably that of an attorney. Along with Rule 7.2, the Administrative Board of the Courts approved the "Summary of Responsibilities of the Attorney for the Child," outlining the essential elements of effective legal representation. Appellate courts have continued the trend toward a change in terminology, both in its identification of counsel and in the text of opinions. In Naomi C. v. Russell A., 48 A.D.3d 203 (1st Dept., 2008), for example, the Appellate Division, First Department, referred to "Law Guardian (now called Attorney for the Child)." *See also*, Bonthu v. Bonthu, -A.D.3d-, 2009 WL 3859919 (2d Dept., 2009); Sarah Ann K. v. Armando Charles C., -A.D.3d-, 2009 WL 3818370 (1st Dept., 2009).

Clearly, the time has come for a comprehensive legislative change of title, a change that will provide a more consistent understanding of the function of the child's attorney and remove a major, persistent source of confusion about this vital role.

⁴⁷ NYS Bar Assoc., *Standards for Attorneys Representing Children in Juvenile Delinquency Proceedings* (June, 2009); NYS Bar Assoc., *Standards for Attorneys Representing Children in Persons in Need of Supervision Proceedings* (June, 2008); NYS Bar Assoc., *Standards for Attorneys Representing Children in Custody, Visitation and Guardianship Proceedings* (June, 2008); NYS Bar Assoc., *Standards for Attorneys Representing Children in New York Child Protective, Foster Care, and Termination of Parental Rights Proceedings* (June, 2007).

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the civil practice law and rules, the domestic relations law, the executive law, the judiciary law, the family court act, the public health law and the social services law, in relation to the representation of children

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision (e) of section 1101 of the civil practice law and rules, as amended by section 64 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(e) When motion not required. Where a party is represented in a civil action by a legal aid society or a legal services or other nonprofit organization, which has as its primary purpose the furnishing of legal services to indigent persons, or by private counsel working on behalf of or under the auspices of such society or organization, all fees and costs relating to the filing and service shall be waived without the necessity of a motion and the case shall be given an index number, or, in a court other than the supreme or county court, an appropriate filing number, provided that a determination has been made by such society, organization or attorney that such party is unable to pay the costs, fees and expenses necessary to prosecute or defend the action, and that an attorney's certification that such determination has been made is filed with the clerk of the court along with the summons and complaint or summons with notice or third-party summons and complaint or otherwise provided to the clerk of the court. Where an attorney certifies, pursuant to section eleven hundred eighteen of the family court act, and in accordance with procedures of the appropriate appellate division, that a party or child who is the subject of an appeal has been represented in the family court by assigned counsel [or a law guardian] or by a legal aid society or a legal services or other nonprofit organization, which has as its primary purpose the furnishing of legal services to indigent persons, or by private counsel working on behalf of or under the auspices of such society or organization, and, in the case of a counsel assigned to an adult party, that the party continues to be indigent, the party or child shall be presumed eligible for poor person relief pursuant to this section.

§2. Section 75-f of the domestic relations law, as added by chapter 386 of the laws of 2001, is amended to read as follows:

§75-f. Priority. If a question of existence or exercise of jurisdiction under this article is raised

in a child custody proceeding, the question, upon request of a party, child or [law guardian] child's attorney must be given priority on the calendar and handled expeditiously.

§3. Subdivision 1 of section 76-f of the domestic relations law, as added by chapter 386 of the laws of 2001, is amended to read as follows:

1. A court of this state which has jurisdiction under this article to make a child custody determination may decline to exercise its jurisdiction at any time if it determines that it is an inconvenient forum under the circumstances and that a court of another state is a more appropriate forum. The issue of inconvenient forum may be raised upon motion of a party, the child or the [law guardian] child's attorney, or upon the court's own motion, or request of another court.

§4. Subdivisions 2 and 4 of section 112-b of the domestic relations law, subdivision 2 as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006 and subdivision 4 as added by section 63 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

2. Agreements regarding communication or contact between an adoptive child, adoptive parent or parents, and a birth parent or parents and/or biological siblings or half-siblings of an adoptive child shall not be legally enforceable unless the terms of the agreement are incorporated into a written court order entered in accordance with the provisions of this section. The court shall not incorporate an agreement regarding communication or contact into an order unless the terms and conditions of the agreement have been set forth in writing and consented to in writing by the parties to the agreement, including the [law guardian] attorney representing the adoptive child. The court shall not enter a proposed order unless the court that approved the surrender of the child determined and stated in its order that the communication with or contact between the adoptive child, the prospective adoptive parent or parents and a birth parent or parents and/or biological siblings or half-siblings, as agreed upon and as set forth in the agreement, would be in the adoptive child's best interests. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a copy of the order entered pursuant to this section incorporating the post-adoption contact agreement shall be given to all parties who have agreed to the terms and conditions of such order.

4. An order incorporating an agreement regarding communication or contact entered under this section may be enforced by any party to the agreement or the [law guardian] attorney for the child by filing a petition in the family court in the county where the adoption was approved. Such petition shall have annexed to it a copy of the order approving the agreement regarding

communication or contact. The court shall not enforce an order under this section unless it finds that the enforcement is in the child's best interests.

§5. Clauses (B) and (C) of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (b) of subdivision (3) of section 113 of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 185 of the laws of 2006, are amended to read as follows:

(B) If the court determines that the child is under the jurisdiction of a different family court, the court in which the adoption petition was filed shall stay its proceeding for not more than thirty days and shall communicate with the family court judge who exercised jurisdiction over the most recent permanency or other proceeding involving the child. The communication shall be recorded or summarized on the record by the court in which the adoption petition was filed. Both courts shall notify the parties and [law guardian] attorney for the child, if any, in their respective proceedings and shall give them an opportunity to present facts and legal argument or to participate in the communication prior to the issuance of a decision on jurisdiction.

(C) The family court judge who exercised jurisdiction over the most recent permanency or other proceeding involving the child shall determine whether he or she should assume or decline jurisdiction over the adoption proceeding. In making its determination, the family court judge shall consider, among other factors: the relative familiarity of each court with the facts and circumstances regarding permanency planning for, and the needs and best interests of, the child; the ability of the [law guardian] attorney for the child to continue [to represent the child] such representation in the adoption proceeding, if appropriate; the convenience of each court to the residence of the prospective adoptive parent or parents; and the relative ability of each court to hear and determine the adoption petition expeditiously. The court in which the adoption petition was filed shall issue an order incorporating this determination of jurisdiction within thirty days of the filing of the adoption petition

§6. Subparagraph (i) of paragraph (d) of subdivision 6 of section 115-b of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 817 of the laws of 1986, is amended to read as follows:

(i) The court shall promptly notify, in writing, the parent, the adoptive parents, their respective attorneys, and the [law guardian] attorney for the child appointed pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine of the family court act or a guardian ad litem appointed pursuant to section four hundred three-a of the surrogate's court procedure act, that the court will, upon the date specified in such notice by the court, or as soon thereafter as the parties may be heard pursuant to this paragraph,

hear and determine whether revocation of the consent of the parent was timely and properly given and whether the adoptive parent's notice of intent to oppose such revocation was timely and properly given and if necessary, hear and determine what disposition should be made with respect to the custody of the child.

§7. Paragraph (c) of subdivision (1-c) of section 240 of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 378 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

(c) For the purpose of making a determination pursuant to clause [(c)] (C) of subparagraph (i) of paragraph (b) of this subdivision, the court shall not be bound by the findings of fact, conclusions of law or ultimate conclusion as determined by the proceedings leading to the conviction of murder in the first or second degree in this state or of an offense in another jurisdiction which, if committed in this state, would constitute murder in either the first or second degree, of a parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, sibling, half-sibling or step-sibling of a child who is the subject of the proceeding. In all proceedings under this section, [a law guardian] an attorney shall be appointed for the child.

§8. Subdivision 1 of section 254 of the domestic relations law, as added by chapter 236 of the laws of 2001, is amended to read as follows:

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in any proceeding for custody, divorce, separation or annulment, whether or not an order of protection or temporary order of protection is sought or has been sought in the past, the court may, upon its own motion or upon the motion of any party or the [law guardian] attorney for the child, authorize any party or the child to keep his or her address confidential from any adverse party or the child, as appropriate, in any pleadings or other papers submitted to the court, where the court finds that the disclosure of the address or other identifying information would pose an unreasonable risk to the health or safety of a party or the child. Pending such a finding, any address or other identifying information of the child or party seeking confidentiality shall be safeguarded and sealed in order to prevent its inadvertent or unauthorized use or disclosure.

§9. Subdivision 6 of section 503 of the executive law, as amended by chapter 465 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

6. The division shall be responsible for bringing violations of law pertaining to detention of juveniles to the attention of each appropriate [law guardian] attorney for the youth or counsel for the defendant who may petition for habeas corpus for persons aggrieved thereby.

§10. Subdivision 4 of section 508 of the executive law, as added by chapter 481 of the laws of 1978 and such section as renumbered by chapter 465 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

4. The division for youth may apply to the sentencing court for permission to transfer a youth not less than sixteen nor more than eighteen years of age to the department of correctional services. Such application shall be made upon notice to the youth, who shall be entitled to be heard upon the application and to be represented by counsel [or law guardian]. The court shall grant the application if it is satisfied that there is no substantial likelihood that the youth will benefit from the programs offered by the division facilities.

§11. Subdivision 7 of section 35 of the judiciary law, as amended by chapter 571 of the laws of 1989, is amended to read as follows:

7. Whenever the supreme court or a surrogate's court shall appoint counsel in a proceeding over which the family court might have exercised jurisdiction had such action or proceeding been commenced in family court or referred thereto pursuant to law, and under circumstances whereby, if such proceeding were pending in family court, such court would be authorized by section two hundred forty-nine of the family court act to appoint [a law guardian] an attorney for the child, such counsel shall be compensated in accordance with the provisions of this section.

§12. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 of section 35-a of the judiciary law, as amended by chapter 834 of the laws of 1975, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Paragraph (a) shall not apply to any compensation awarded to appointees assigned to represent indigent persons pursuant to Article 18-B of the county law, counsel assigned pursuant to section thirty-five of the judiciary law[, law guardians] or counsel appointed pursuant to the family court act[, or referees appointed pursuant to section 78.25 of the mental hygiene law].

§13. Subdivision (c) of section 154 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 441 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

(c) In a proceeding arising under article four, five, six, eight or ten of this act in which an order of protection is sought or in which a violation of an order of protection is alleged, the court may send process without the state in the same manner and with the same effect as process sent within the state in the exercise of personal jurisdiction over any person, subject to the jurisdiction of the court under section three hundred one or three hundred two of the civil practice law and rules,

notwithstanding that such person is not a resident or domiciliary of the state, so long as: (1) the act or acts giving rise to the application for issuance or enforcement of the order of protection occurred within the state; and (2) the applicant for the order of protection resides or is domiciled in the state or has substantial contacts in the state, including, but not limited to, presence on a regular basis in the state. Upon good cause shown, the court may issue a temporary order of protection in accordance with article four, five, six, eight or ten of this act. Where personal jurisdiction over a non-resident or non-domiciliary respondent would not be obtainable but for this subdivision, the papers to be served shall include a conspicuous notice that the exercise of such jurisdiction is limited to the issue of the order of protection. Where service of a petition and summons upon a non-resident or non-domiciliary respondent is required, such service shall be made at least twenty days before the return date. Where service is effected on an out-of-state respondent and the respondent defaults by failing to appear, the court may on its own motion, or upon application of any party or the [law guardian] attorney for the child, proceed to a hearing with respect to issuance or enforcement of the order of protection. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect or alter the exercise of personal jurisdiction with respect to issues other than the order of protection.

§14. Paragraph (a) of subdivision (2) of section 154-b of the family court act, as amended by chapter 236 of the laws of 2001, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in any proceeding under article four, five, five-b, six, eight or ten of this act, whether or not an order of protection or temporary order of protection is sought or has been sought in the past, the court may, upon its own motion or upon the motion of any party or the [law guardian] child's attorney, authorize any party or the child to keep his or her address confidential from any adverse party or the child, as appropriate, in any pleadings or other papers submitted to the court, where the court finds that disclosure of such address or other identifying information would pose an unreasonable risk to the health or safety of a party or the child. Pending such a finding, any address or other identifying information of the child or party seeking confidentiality shall be safeguarded and sealed in order to prevent its inadvertent or unauthorized use or disclosure.

§15. Subdivision 2 of section 154-c of the family court act, as added by chapter 186 of the laws of 1997, is amended to read as follows:

2. Modifications of orders of protection. Except as provided in subdivision two of section

one hundred fifty-four-d of this act, any motion to vacate or modify any order of protection or temporary order of protection issued under this act shall be on notice to the non-moving party and the [law guardian] child's attorney, if any.

§16. The heading and part heading of part 4 of article 2 and section 241 of the family court act, section 241 as amended by chapter 476 of the laws of 1988, are amended to read as follows:
ADMINISTRATION, MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS, [LAW GUARDIANS] ATTORNEYS FOR CHILDREN, AUXILIARY SERVICES

Part 4. [Law guardians] Attorneys for children.

§ 241. Findings and purpose. This act declares that minors who are the subject of family court proceedings or appeals in proceedings originating in the family court should be represented by counsel of their own choosing or by [law guardians] assigned counsel. This declaration is based on a finding that counsel is often indispensable to a practical realization of due process of law and may be helpful in making reasoned determinations of fact and proper orders of disposition. This part establishes a system of [law guardians] attorneys for [minors] children who often require the assistance of counsel to help protect their interests and to help them express their wishes to the court. Nothing in this act is intended to preclude any other interested person from appearing by counsel.

§17. Section 242 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 962 of the laws of 1970, is amended to read as follows:

§242. [Law guardian] Attorney for the child. As used in this act, “[law guardian] attorney for the child” refers to an attorney admitted to practice law in the state of New York and designated under this part to represent minors pursuant to section two hundred [and] forty-nine of this act.

§18. Section 243 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 443 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The office of court administration may enter into an agreement with a legal aid society for the society to provide [law guardians for] attorneys to represent children in the family court or appeals in proceedings originating in the family court in a county having a legal aid society.

(b) The appellate division of the supreme court for the judicial department in which a county is located may, upon determining that a county panel designated pursuant to subdivision (c) of this section is not sufficient to afford appropriate [law guardian services] services of attorneys for children, enter into an agreement, subject to regulations as may be promulgated by the administrative

board of the courts, with any qualified attorney or attorneys to serve as [law guardian or as law guardians] attorneys for children for the family court or appeals in proceedings originating in the family court in that county.

(c) The appellate division of the supreme court for the judicial department in which a county is located may designate a panel of [law guardians] attorneys for children for the family court and appeals in proceedings originating in the family court in that county, subject to the approval of the administrative board of the courts. For this purpose, [it] such appellate division may invite a bar association to recommend qualified persons for consideration by the [said] appellate division in making its designation, subject to standards as may be promulgated by such administrative board.

§19. Subdivision (b) of section 244 of the family court act, as added by chapter 833 of the laws of 1974, is amended to read as follows:

(b) No designations pursuant to subdivision (c) of [such] section two hundred forty-three may be for a term of more than one year, but successive designations may be made. The appellate division proceeding pursuant to [such] subdivision (c) of section two hundred forty-three , may at any time increase or decrease the number of [law guardians] attorneys for children designated in any county and may rescind any designation at any time, subject to the approval of the office of court administration.

§20. Section 245 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 443 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

§245. Compensation. (a) If the office of court administration proceeds pursuant to subdivision (a) of section two hundred forty-three of this chapter, the agreement shall provide that the society shall be reimbursed on a cost basis for services rendered under the agreement. The agreement shall contain a general plan for the organization and operation of the [providing] program for the provision of [law guardians] attorneys for children by the respective legal aid society, approved by the [said] administrative board, and the office of court administration may require such reports as it deems necessary from the society.

(b) If an appellate division proceeds pursuant to subdivision (b) of such section two hundred forty-three, the agreement may provide that the attorney or attorneys shall be reimbursed on a cost basis for services rendered under the agreement. The agreement shall contain a general plan for the organization and operation of the [providing] program for the provision of [law guardians] attorneys

for children by the respective attorney or attorneys, and the appellate division may require such reports as it deems necessary from the attorney or attorneys.

(c) If an appellate division proceeds pursuant to subdivision (c) of such section two hundred forty-three, [law guardians] attorneys for children shall be compensated and allowed expenses and disbursements in the same amounts established by subdivision three of section thirty-five of the judiciary law.

§21. Section 248 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 833 of the laws of 1974, is amended to read as follows:

§248. Appropriations. The costs of [law guardians] attorneys for children under section two hundred forty-five shall be payable by the state of New York within the amounts appropriated therefor.

§22. Section 249 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 76 of the laws of 2002, subdivision (a) as amended by section 2 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§249. Appointment of [law guardian] attorney for child. (a) In a proceeding under article three, seven, ten or ten-A of this act or where a revocation of an adoption consent is opposed under section one hundred fifteen-b of the domestic relations law or in any proceeding under section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law or when a minor is sought to be placed in protective custody under section one hundred fifty-eight of this act, the family court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent a minor who is the subject of the proceeding or who is sought to be placed in protective custody, if independent legal representation is not available to such minor. In any proceeding to extend or continue the placement of a juvenile delinquent or person in need of supervision pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-six or 353.3 of this act or any proceeding to extend or continue a commitment to the custody of the commissioner of mental health or the commissioner of mental retardation and developmental disabilities pursuant to section 322.2 of this act, the court shall not permit the respondent to waive the right to be represented by counsel chosen by the respondent, respondent's parent, or other person legally responsible for the respondent's care, or by [a law guardian] assigned counsel. In any other proceeding in which the court has jurisdiction, the court may appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent the child, when, in the opinion of the

family court judge, such representation will serve the purposes of this act, if independent legal counsel is not available to the child. The family court on its own motion may make such appointment.

(b) In making an appointment of [a law guardian] an attorney for a child pursuant to this section, the court shall, to the extent practicable and appropriate, appoint the same [law guardian] attorney who has previously represented the child. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in a proceeding under article three of this act following an order of removal made pursuant to article seven hundred twenty-five of the criminal procedure law, the court shall, wherever practicable, appoint the same counsel [representing] who represented the juvenile offender in the criminal proceedings [as law guardian].

§23. Section 249-a of the family court act, as added by chapter 513 of the laws of 1978, is amended to read as follows:

§ 249-a. Waiver of counsel. A minor who is a subject of a juvenile delinquency or person in need of supervision proceeding shall be presumed to lack the requisite knowledge and maturity to waive the appointment of [a law guardian] an attorney. This presumption may be rebutted only after [a law guardian] an attorney has been appointed and the court determines after a hearing at which the [law guardian] attorney appears and participates and upon clear and convincing evidence that (a) the minor understands the nature of the charges, the possible dispositional alternatives and the possible defenses to the charges, (b) the minor possesses the maturity, knowledge and intelligence necessary to conduct his or her own defense, and (c) waiver is in the best interest of the minor.

§24. Subdivision 1 of section 249-b of the family court act, as amended by chapter 476 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as follows:

1. prescribe workload standards for attorneys for children, including maximum numbers of children who can be represented at any given time, in order to ensure that children receive effective assistance of counsel comporting with legal and ethical mandates, the complexity of the proceedings affecting each client to which the [law guardian] attorney is assigned, and the nature of the court appearance likely to be required for each individual client; and

§25. Subdivision (b) of section 251 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 296 of the laws of 1993, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Except for examinations conducted pursuant to section 322.1 of this act where the family court determines that an inpatient examination is necessary, or those ordered after a fact-finding

hearing has been completed under article three or seven of this act and the court determines according to the criteria in subdivision three of section 320.5 or subdivision (a) of section seven hundred thirty-nine of this act that the child should be detained pending disposition, or unless otherwise consented to by the adult to be examined or by the [law guardian] attorney representing the respondent, all examinations pursuant to this section shall be conducted on an outpatient basis. An order for remand after a fact-finding hearing under article three or seven of this act shall include findings on the record supporting the need for examination in a residential facility and a determination that it is the most appropriate facility. Remands for examinations shall be for a period determined by the facility, which shall not exceed thirty days, except that, upon motion by the person detained on its own motion, the court may, for good cause shown, terminate the remand at any time.

§26. Subdivision 2 of section 301.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

2. “Respondent” means the person against whom a juvenile delinquency petition is filed pursuant to section 310.1. Provided, however, that any act of the respondent required or authorized under this article may be performed by his or her attorney [or law guardian] unless expressly provided otherwise.

§27. Subdivision 3 of section 306.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows

3. Upon receipt of a report of the division of criminal justice services pursuant to this section, the recipient office or agency must promptly transmit two copies of such report to the family court in which the proceeding may be originated and two copies thereof to the presentment agency who shall furnish a copy thereof to counsel for the respondent [or to the respondent’s law guardian].

§28. Subdivision 2 of section 307.4 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

2. At such hearing the court must appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent the child pursuant to the provisions of section two hundred forty-nine if independent legal representation is not available to such child.

§29. Subdivisions 2, 3 and 4 of section 320.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, are amended to read as follows:

2. At the initial appearance the court must appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent

the respondent pursuant to the provisions of section two hundred forty-nine if independent legal representation is not available to such respondent.

3. The initial appearance may be adjourned for no longer than seventy-two hours or until the next court day, whichever is sooner, to enable an [appointed law guardian or other counsel] attorney for the respondent to appear before the court.

4. The clerk of the court shall notify the presentment agency and any [appointed law guardian] attorney for the respondent of the initial appearance date.

§30. Section 320.3 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

§320.3. Notice of rights. At the time the respondent first appears before the court, the respondent and his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care shall be advised of the respondent's right to remain silent and of his or her right to be represented by counsel chosen by him or her or by [a law guardian] an attorney assigned by the court. Provided, however, that in the event of the failure of the respondent's parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care to appear, after reasonable and substantial effort has been made to notify such parent or responsible person of the commencement of the proceeding and such initial appearance, the court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney for the respondent.

§31. Subdivision 1 of section 320.4 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

1. At the initial appearance the court must inform the respondent, or cause him or her to be informed in its presence, of the charge or charges contained in the petition, and the presentment agency must cause the respondent and his or her counsel [or law guardian] to be furnished with a copy of the petition.

§32. Subdivision 1 and paragraphs (a) and (d) of subdivision 5 of section 322.2 of the family court act, subdivision 1 as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982 and paragraphs (a) and (d) of subdivision 5 as amended by chapter 789 of the laws of 1985, are amended to read as follows:

1. Upon receipt of the examination reports ordered under section 322.1, the court shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the respondent is an incapacitated person. The respondent, the counsel [or law guardian] for the respondent, the presentment agency and the commissioner of mental health or the commissioner of mental retardation and developmental disabilities, as

appropriate, shall be notified of such hearing at least five days prior to the date thereof and afforded an opportunity to be heard.

(a) If the court finds that there is probable cause to believe that the respondent committed a felony, it shall order the respondent committed to the custody of the commissioner of mental health or the commissioner of mental retardation and developmental disabilities for an initial period not to exceed one year from the date of such order. Such period may be extended annually upon further application to the court by the commissioner having custody or his or her designee. Such application must be made not more than sixty days prior to the expiration of such period on forms that have been prescribed by the chief administrator of the courts. At that time, the commissioner must give written notice of the application to the respondent, the counsel [or law guardian] representing the respondent and the mental hygiene legal service if the respondent is at a residential facility. Upon receipt of such application, the court must conduct a hearing to determine the issue of capacity. If, at the conclusion of a hearing conducted pursuant to this subdivision, the court finds that the respondent is no longer incapacitated, he or she shall be returned to the family court for further proceedings pursuant to this article. If the court is satisfied that the respondent continues to be incapacitated, the court shall authorize continued custody of the respondent by the commissioner for a period not to exceed one year. Such extensions shall not continue beyond a reasonable period of time necessary to determine whether the respondent will attain the capacity to proceed to a fact finding hearing in the foreseeable future but in no event shall continue beyond the respondent's eighteenth birthday.

(d) The commissioner shall review the condition of the respondent within forty-five days after the respondent is committed to the custody of the commissioner. He or she shall make a second review within ninety days after the respondent is committed to his or her custody. Thereafter, he or she shall review the condition of the respondent every ninety days. The respondent and the counsel [or law guardian] for the respondent, shall be notified of any such review and afforded an opportunity to be heard. The commissioner having custody shall apply to the court for an order dismissing the petition whenever he or she determines that there is a substantial probability that the respondent will continue to be incapacitated for the foreseeable future. At the time of such application the commissioner must give written notice of the application to the respondent, the presentment agency and the mental hygiene legal service if the respondent is at a residential facility. Upon receipt of such application, the court may on its own motion conduct a hearing to determine

whether there is substantial probability that the respondent will continue to be incapacitated for the foreseeable future, and it must conduct such hearing if a demand therefor is made by the respondent or the mental hygiene legal service within ten days from the date that notice of the application was given to them. The respondent may apply to the court for an order of dismissal on the same ground.

§33. Subdivisions 2 and 3 and paragraph (b) of subdivision 7 of section 330.1 of the family court act, as added by chapter 398 of the laws of 1983, are amended to read as follows:

2. Bill of particulars upon request. Upon a timely request for a bill of particulars by a respondent against whom a petition is pending, the presentment agency shall within fifteen days of the service of the request or as soon thereafter as is practicable, serve upon the respondent or his or her attorney [or law guardian] and file with the court, the bill of particulars, except to the extent the presentment agency shall have refused to comply with the request pursuant to subdivision four of this section. If the respondent is detained, the court shall direct the filing of the bill of particulars on an expedited basis and prior to the commencement of the fact-finding hearing.

3. Timeliness of request. A request for a bill of particulars shall be timely if made within thirty days after the conclusion of the initial appearance and before commencement of the fact-finding hearing. If the respondent is not represented by counsel [or a law guardian], and has requested an adjournment to retain counsel or to have [a law guardian] counsel appointed, the thirty-day period shall commence, for the purposes of a request for a bill of particulars by the respondent, on the date counsel [or a law guardian] initially appeared on respondent's behalf. However, the court may direct compliance with a request for a bill of particulars that, for good cause shown, could not have been made within the time specified.

(b) An order limiting, conditioning, delaying or regulating the bill of particulars may, among other things, require that any material copied or derived therefrom be maintained in the exclusive possession of the attorney [or law guardian] for the respondent and be used for the exclusive purpose of preparing for the defense of the juvenile delinquency proceeding.

§34. Subdivision 2 of section 331.1 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

2. "Attorneys' work product" means property to the extent that it contains the opinions, theories or conclusions of the presentment agency[, law guardian], counsel for the respondent or members of their staffs.

§35. Subdivision 1 of section 332.2 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 398 of the laws of 1983, is amended to read as follows:

1. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this article, all pretrial motions shall be filed within thirty days after the conclusion of the initial appearance and before the commencement of the fact-finding hearing, or within such additional times as the court may fix upon application of the respondent made prior to entering a finding pursuant to section 345.1. If the respondent is not represented by counsel [or a law guardian] and has requested an adjournment to retain counsel or to have [a law guardian] counsel appointed, such thirty-day period shall commence on the date counsel [or a law guardian] initially appears on the respondent's behalf. A motion made pursuant to subdivision eight of section 332.1 must be made prior to the commencement of a fact-finding hearing or the entry of an admission.

§36. Section 341.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

§341.2. Presence of respondent and his or her parent. 1. The respondent and his or her counsel [or law guardian] shall be personally present at any hearing under this article and at the initial appearance.

2. If a respondent conducts himself or herself in so disorderly and disruptive a manner that the hearing cannot be carried on with [him] the respondent in the courtroom, the court may order a recess for the purpose of enabling [his] the respondent's parent or other person responsible for his or her care and [his law guardian or] the respondent's counsel to exercise full efforts to assist the respondent to conduct himself or herself so as to permit the proceedings to resume in an orderly manner. If such efforts fail, the respondent may be removed from the courtroom if, after he or she is warned by the court that he or she will be removed, he or she continues such disorderly and disruptive conduct. Such time shall not extend beyond the minimum necessary to restore order.

3. The respondent's parent or other person responsible for his or her care shall be present at any hearing under this article and at the initial appearance. However, the court shall not be prevented from proceeding by the absence of such parent or person if reasonable and substantial effort has been made to notify such parent or other person and if the respondent and his [law guardian] or her counsel are present.

§37. Subdivision 4 and the opening paragraph of subdivision 7 of section 353.3 of the family

court act, subdivision 4 as amended by chapter 465 of the laws of 1992, the opening paragraph of subdivision 7 as amended by chapter 181 of the laws of 2000, are amended to read as follows:

4. Where the respondent is placed with the division for youth, the court may direct the division to place the respondent with an authorized agency or class of authorized agencies and in the event the division is unable to so place the respondent or, discontinues the placement with the authorized agency, the respondent shall be deemed to have been placed with the division pursuant to paragraph (b) or (c) of subdivision three of this section. In such cases, the division shall notify the court, presentment agency, [law guardian] respondent's attorney and parent or other person responsible for the respondent's care, of the reason for discontinuing the placement with the authorized agency and the level and location of the youth's placement.

The place in which or the person with whom the respondent has been placed under this section shall submit a report to the court, [law guardian or] respondent's attorney of record, and presentment agency at the conclusion of the placement period, except as provided in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subdivision. Such report shall include recommendations and such supporting data as is appropriate. The court may extend a placement pursuant to section 355.3 of this article.

§38. Section 354.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

§354.2. Duties of counsel [or law guardian]. 1. If the court has entered a dispositional order pursuant to section 352.2, it shall be the duty of the respondent's counsel [or law guardian] to promptly advise such respondent and his or her parent or other person responsible for his or her care in writing of [his] the right to appeal to the appropriate appellate division of the supreme court, the time limitations involved, the manner of instituting an appeal and obtaining a transcript of the testimony and the right to apply for leave to appeal as a poor person if he or she is unable to pay the cost of an appeal. It shall be the further duty of such counsel [or law guardian] to explain to the respondent and his or her parent or person responsible for his or her care the procedures for instituting an appeal, the possible reasons upon which an appeal may be based and the nature and possible consequences of the appellate process.

2. It shall also be the duty of such counsel [or law guardian] to ascertain whether the respondent wishes to appeal and, if so, to serve and file the necessary notice of appeal.

3. If the respondent has been permitted to waive the appointment of [a law guardian] counsel

pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine-a, it shall be the duty of the court to provide the notice and explanation pursuant to subdivision one and, if the respondent indicates that he or she wishes to appeal, the clerk of the court shall file and serve the notice of appeal.

§39. Subdivision 3 of section 365.3 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

3. If the presentment agency is the appellant, it must serve a copy of such notice of appeal upon the respondent and upon the attorney [or law guardian] who last appeared for him or her in the family court.

§40. Subdivision 1 of section 375.1 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 645 of the laws of 1996, is amended to read as follows:

1. Upon termination of a delinquency proceeding against a respondent in favor of such respondent, unless the presentment agency upon written motion with not less than eight days notice to such respondent demonstrates to the satisfaction of the court that the interests of justice require otherwise or the court on its own motion with not less than eight days notice to such respondent determines that the interest of justice require otherwise and states the reason for such determination on the record, the clerk of the court shall immediately notify the [law guardian or] counsel for the child, the director of the appropriate presentment agency, and the heads of the appropriate probation department and police department or other law enforcement agency, that the proceeding has terminated in favor of the respondent and, unless the court has directed otherwise, that the records of such action or proceeding, other than those destroyed pursuant to section 354.1 of this act, shall be sealed. Upon receipt of such notification all official records and papers, including judgments and orders of the court, but not including public court decisions or opinions or records and briefs on appeal, relating to the arrest, the prosecution and the probation service proceedings, including all duplicates or copies thereof, on file with the court, police agency, probation service and presentment agency shall be sealed and not made available to any person or public or private agency. Such records shall remain sealed during the pendency of any motion made pursuant to this subdivision.

§41. Subdivision (c) of section 435 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 81 of the laws of 2003, is amended to read as follows

(c) Reports prepared by the probation service for use by the court at any time prior to the making of an order of disposition shall be deemed confidential information furnished to the court

which the court in a proper case may, in its discretion, withhold from or disclose in whole or in part to the support magistrate, [law guardian] child's attorney, counsel, party in interest, or other appropriate person. Such reports may not be made available to the court prior to a determination that the respondent is liable under this article for the support of the petitioner.

§42. Subdivision (b) of section 625 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 666 of the laws of 1976, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Reports prepared by the probation service or a duly authorized agency for use by the court prior to the making of an order of disposition shall be deemed confidential information furnished to the court which the court in a proper case may, in its discretion, withhold from or disclose in whole or in part to the [law guardian] child's attorney, counsel, party in interest, or other appropriate person. Such reports may not be furnished to the court prior to the completion of a fact-finding hearing, but may be used in a dispositional hearing or in the making of an order of disposition without a dispositional hearing pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section.

§43. Subdivision (d) of section 633 of the family court act, as added by section 7 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(d) Not later than sixty days before the expiration of the period of suspended judgment, the petitioner shall file a report with the family court and all parties, including the respondent and his or her attorney, the [law guardian] child's attorney and intervenors, if any, regarding the respondent's compliance with the terms of suspended judgment. The report shall be reviewed by the court on the scheduled court date. Unless a motion or order to show cause has been filed prior to the expiration of the period of suspended judgment alleging a violation or seeking an extension of the period of the suspended judgment, the terms of the disposition of suspended judgment shall be deemed satisfied and an order committing the guardianship and custody of the child shall not be entered.

§44. Subdivision (d) of section 651 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 657 of the laws of 2007, is amended to read as follows:

(d) With respect to applications by a grandparent or grandparents for visitation or custody rights, made pursuant to section seventy-two or two hundred forty of the domestic relations law, with a child remanded or placed in the care of a person, official, agency or institution pursuant to the provisions of article ten of this act, the applicant, in such manner as the court shall prescribe, shall serve a copy of the application upon the social services official having care and custody of such

child, and the child's [law guardian] attorney, who shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard thereon.

§45. Subdivision (a) of section 728 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as follows:

(a) If a child in custody is brought before a judge of the family court before a petition is filed, the judge shall hold a hearing for the purpose of making a preliminary determination of whether the court appears to have jurisdiction over the child. At the commencement of the hearing, the judge shall advise the child of his or her right to remain silent, his or her right to be represented by counsel of his or her own choosing, and of [his] the right to have [a law guardian] an attorney assigned in accord with part four of article two of this act. [He] The judge must also allow the child a reasonable time to send for his or her parents or other person or persons legally responsible for his or her care, and for counsel, and adjourn the hearing for that purpose.

§46. Subdivisions (a) and (c) of section 741 of the family court act, subdivision (a) as amended and subdivision (c) as added by chapter 837 of the laws of 1975, are amended to read as follows:

(a) At the initial appearance of a respondent in a proceeding and at the commencement of any hearing under this article, the respondent and his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care shall be advised of the respondent's right to remain silent and of [his] the respondent's right to be represented by counsel chosen by him or her or his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care, or by [a law guardian] an attorney assigned by the court under part four of article two. Provided, however, that in the event of the failure of the respondent's parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care to appear, after reasonable and substantial effort has been made to notify such parent or responsible person of the commencement of the proceeding and such initial appearance, the court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney for the respondent and shall, unless inappropriate also appoint a guardian ad litem for such respondent, and in such event, shall inform the respondent of such rights in the presence of such [law guardian] attorney and any guardian ad litem.

(c) At any hearing under this article, the court shall not be prevented from proceeding by the absence of the respondent's parent or other person responsible for his or her care if reasonable and substantial effort has been made to notify such parent or responsible person of the occurrence of the

hearing and if the respondent and his [law guardian] or her attorney are present. The court shall, unless inappropriate, also appoint a guardian ad litem who shall be present at such hearing and any subsequent hearing.

§47. Subdivision 2 of section 750 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 106 of the laws of 1987, is amended to read as follows:

2. After the completion of the fact-finding hearing and the making of the required findings and prior to the dispositional hearing, the reports or memoranda prepared or obtained by the probation service and furnished to the court shall be made available by the court for examination and copying by the child's [law guardian or] counsel or by the respondent if he or she is not represented by [a law guardian or other] counsel. All diagnostic assessments and probation investigation reports shall be submitted to the court at least five court days prior to the commencement of the dispositional hearing. In its discretion the court may except from disclosure a part or parts of the reports or memoranda which are not relevant to a proper disposition, or sources of information which have been obtained on a promise of confidentiality, or any other portion thereof, disclosure of which would not be in the interest of justice. In all cases where a part or parts of the reports or memoranda are not disclosed, the court shall state for the record that a part or parts of the reports or memoranda have been excepted and the reasons for its action. The action of the court excepting information from disclosure shall be subject to review on any appeal from the order of disposition. If such reports or memoranda are made available to the respondent or his [law guardian] or her counsel, they shall also be made available to the counsel presenting the petition pursuant to section two hundred fifty-four and, in the court's discretion, to any other attorney representing the petitioner.

§48. Section 760 of the family court act, as added by chapter 9 of the laws of 1989, is amended to read as follows:

§760. Duties of counsel [or law guardian]. 1. If the court has entered a dispositional order pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-four, it shall be the duty of the respondent's counsel [or law guardian] to promptly advise such respondent and if his or her parent or other person responsible for his or her care is not the petitioner, such parent or other person responsible for his or her care, in writing of [his] the right to appeal to the appropriate appellate division of the supreme court, the time limitations involved, the manner of instituting an appeal and obtaining a transcript of the testimony and the right to apply for leave to appeal as a poor person if he or she is unable to pay the cost of an

appeal. It shall be the further duty of such counsel [or law guardian] to explain to the respondent and if his or her parent or other person responsible for his or her care is not the petitioner, such parent or person responsible for his or her care, the procedures for instituting an appeal, the possible reasons upon which an appeal may be based and the nature and possible consequences of the appellate process.

2. It shall also be the duty of such counsel [or law guardian] to ascertain whether the respondent wishes to appeal and, if so, to serve and file the necessary notice of appeal.

3. If the respondent has been permitted to waive the appointment of [a law guardian] counsel pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine-a, it shall be the duty of the court to provide the notice and explanation pursuant to subdivision one and, if the respondent indicates that he or she wishes to appeal, the clerk of the court shall file and serve the notice of appeal.

§49. Subdivision (b) of section 835 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 529 of the laws of 1963, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Reports prepared by the probation service for use by the court at any time prior to the making of an order of disposition shall be deemed confidential information furnished to the court which the court in a proper case may, in its discretion, withhold from or disclose in whole or in part to the [law guardian] child's attorney, counsel, party in interest, or other appropriate person. Such reports may not be furnished to the court prior to the completion of a fact-finding hearing, but may be used in a dispositional hearing.

§50. Section 1016 of the family court act, as added by chapter 319 of the laws of 1990, the second undesignated paragraph as amended by section 9 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, the fourth undesignated paragraph as added by chapter 560 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

§1016. Appointment of [law guardian] attorney for the child. The court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent a child who has been allegedly abused or neglected upon the earliest occurrence of any of the following: (i) the court receiving notice, pursuant to paragraph (iv) of subdivision (b) of section [ten hundred] one thousand twenty-four of this act, of the emergency removal of the child; (ii) an application for an order for removal of the child prior to the filing of a petition, pursuant to section one thousand twenty-two of this act; or (iii) the filing of a petition alleging abuse or neglect pursuant to this article.

Whenever [a law guardian] an attorney has been appointed by the family court pursuant to

section two hundred forty-nine of this act to represent a child in a proceeding under this article, such appointment shall continue without further court order or appointment during (i) an order of disposition issued by the court pursuant to section one thousand fifty-two of this article directing supervision, protection or suspending judgment, or any extension thereof; (ii) an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal as provided for in section one thousand thirty-nine of this article or any extension thereof; or (iii) the pendency of the foster care placement ordered pursuant to section one thousand fifty-two of this article. All notices and reports required by law shall be provided to such [law guardian] attorney for the child. Such appointment shall terminate upon the expiration of such order, unless another appointment of [a law guardian] an attorney for the child has been made by the court or unless such [law guardian] attorney makes application to the court to be relieved of his or her appointment. Upon approval of such application to be relieved, the court shall immediately appoint another [law guardian] attorney for the child to whom all notices and reports required by law shall be provided.

[A law guardian] The attorney for the child shall be entitled to compensation pursuant to applicable provisions of law for services rendered up to and including disposition of the petition. The [law guardian] attorney for the child shall, by separate application, be entitled to compensation for services rendered subsequent to the disposition of the petition.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the authority of the court to remove [a law guardian] the attorney for the child from his or her assignment.

§51. Paragraphs (ii) and (iii) of subdivision (a) of section 1027 of the family court act, as amended by section 15 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

(ii) In any such case where the child has been removed, any person originating a proceeding under this article shall, or the [law guardian] attorney for the child may apply for, or the court on its own motion may order, a hearing at any time after the petition is filed to determine whether the child's interests require protection pending a final order of disposition. Such hearing must be scheduled for no later than the next court day after the application for such hearing has been made.

(iii) In any case under this article in which a child has not been removed from his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care, any person originating a proceeding under this article or the [law guardian] attorney for the child may apply for, or the court on its own motion may order, a hearing at any time after the petition is filed to determine whether the child's

interests require protection, including whether the child should be removed from his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care, pending a final order of disposition. Such hearing must be scheduled for no later than the next court day after the application for such hearing has been made.

§52. Subdivision (a) of section 1028 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 36 of the laws of 1994, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Upon the application of the parent or other person legally responsible for the care of a child temporarily removed under this part or upon the application of the [law guardian] child's attorney for an order returning the child, the court shall hold a hearing to determine whether the child should be returned (i) unless there has been a hearing pursuant to section [ten hundred] one thousand twenty-seven of this article on the removal of the child at which the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care was present and had the opportunity to be represented by counsel, or (ii) upon good cause shown. Except for good cause shown, such hearing shall be held within three court days of the application and shall not be adjourned. Upon such hearing, the court shall grant the application, unless it finds that the return presents an imminent risk to the child's life or health. If a parent or other person legally responsible for the care of a child waives his or her right to a hearing under this section, the court shall advise such person at that time that, notwithstanding such waiver, an application under this section may be made at any time during the pendency of the proceedings.

§53. Subdivision (a) of section 1029 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 673 of the laws of 1988, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The family court, upon the application of any person who may originate a proceeding under this article, for good cause shown, may issue a temporary order of protection, before or after the filing of such petition, which may contain any of the provisions authorized on the making of an order of protection under section [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-six. If such order is granted before the filing of a petition and a petition is not filed under this article within ten days from the granting of such order, the order shall be vacated. In any case where a petition has been filed and [a law guardian] an attorney for the child has been appointed, such [law guardian] attorney may make application for a temporary order of protection pursuant to the provisions of this section.

§54. Subdivisions (b) and (d) of section 1030 of the family court act, as added by chapter 457 of the laws of 1988, are amended to read as follows:

(b) A respondent who has not been afforded such visitation may apply to the court for an order requiring the local social services official having temporary custody of the child pursuant to this part or pursuant to subdivision (d) of section one thousand fifty-one of this article, to permit the respondent to visit the child at stated periods. Such application shall be made upon notice to the local social services official and to any [law guardian] attorney appointed to represent the child, who shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard thereon.

(d) An order made under this section may be modified by the court for good cause shown, upon application by any party or the child's [law guardian] attorney, and upon notice of such application to all other parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney, who shall be afforded an opportunity to be heard thereon.

§55. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section 1033-b of the family court act, as amended by chapter 75 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

(a) At the initial appearance, the court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent the interests of any child named in a petition who is alleged to be abused or neglected, unless [a law guardian] an attorney has already been appointed for such child pursuant to section [ten hundred] one thousand sixteen of this act.

§56. Subdivision (c) of section 1036 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 69 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

(c) In cases involving either abuse or neglect, the court may send process without the state in the same manner and with the same effect as process sent within the state in the exercise of personal jurisdiction over any person subject to the jurisdiction of the court under section three hundred one or three hundred two of the civil practice law and rules, notwithstanding that such person is not a resident or domiciliary of the state, where the allegedly abused or neglected child resides or is domiciled within the state and the alleged abuse or neglect occurred within the state. In cases involving abuse where service of a petition and summons upon a non-resident or non-domiciliary respondent is required, such service shall be made within ten days after its issuance. If service can not be effected in ten days, an extension of the period to effect service may be granted by the court for good cause shown upon application of any party or the [law guardian] child's attorney. Where service is effected on an out of state respondent and the respondent defaults by failing to appear to answer the petition, the court may on its own motion, or upon application of any party or the [law

guardian] child's attorney proceed to a fact finding hearing thereon.

§57. Subdivisions (b) and (c) of section 1038 of the family court act, subdivision (b) as added by chapter 724 of the laws of 1989, subdivision (c) as amended by chapter 65 of the laws of 1992, are amended to read as follows:

(b) Pursuant to a demand [pursuant to] made under section [thirty-one] three thousand one hundred twenty of the civil practice law and rules, a petitioner or social services official shall provide to a respondent or the [law guardian] child's attorney any records, photographs or other evidence demanded relevant to the proceeding, for inspection and photocopying. The petitioner or social services official may delete the identity of the persons who filed reports pursuant to section four hundred fifteen of the social services law, unless such petitioner or official intends to offer such reports into evidence at a hearing held pursuant to this article. The petitioner or social services official may move for a protective order to withhold records, photographs or evidence which will not be offered into evidence and the disclosure of which is likely to endanger the life or health of the child.

(c) A respondent or the [law guardian] child's attorney may move for an order directing that any child who is the subject of a proceeding under this article be made available for examination by a physician, psychologist or social worker selected by such party or [law guardian] child's attorney. In determining the motion, the court shall consider the need of the respondent or [law guardian] child's attorney for such examination to assist in the preparation of the case and the potential harm to the child from the examination. Nothing in this section shall preclude the parties from agreeing upon a person to conduct such examination without court order

Any examination or interview, other than a physical examination, of a child who is the subject of a proceeding under this article, for the purposes of offering expert testimony to a court regarding the sexual abuse of the child, as such term is defined by section one thousand twelve of this article, may, in the discretion of the court, be videotaped in its entirety with access to be provided to the court, the [law guardian] child's attorney and all parties. In determining whether such examination or interview should be videotaped, the court shall consider the effect of the videotaping on the reliability of the examination, the effect of the videotaping on the child and the needs of the parties, including the [law guardian] attorney for the child, for the videotape. Prior to admitting a videotape of an examination or interview into evidence, the person conducting such examination or

the person operating the video camera shall submit to the court a verified statement confirming that such videotape is a complete and unaltered videographic record of such examination of the child. The proponent of entry of the videotape into evidence must establish that the potential prejudicial effect is substantially outweighed by the probative value of the videotape in assessing the reliability of the validator in court. Nothing in this section shall in any way affect the admissibility of such evidence in any other court proceeding. The chief administrator of the courts shall promulgate regulations protecting the confidentiality and security of such tapes, and regulating the access thereto, consistent with the provisions of this section.

§58. Section 1038-a of the family court act, as amended by chapter 162 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

§1038-a. Discovery; upon court order. Upon motion of a petitioner or [law guardian] attorney for the child, the court may order a respondent to provide nontestimonial evidence, only if the court finds probable cause that the evidence is reasonably related to establishing the allegations in a petition filed pursuant to this article. Such order may include, but not be limited to, provision for the taking of samples of blood, urine, hair or other materials from the respondent's body in a manner not involving an unreasonable intrusion or risk of serious physical injury to the respondent.

§59. Subdivisions (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of section 1039 of the family court act, subdivision (a) as amended by chapter 601 of the laws of 1985, subdivision (b) as amended by chapter 707 of the laws of 1975, subdivision (c) as amended by chapter 323 of the laws of 1990, subdivision (d) as amended by chapter 167 of the laws of 1990, and subdivision (e) as amended by chapter 194 of the laws of 1990, are amended to read as follows:

(a) Prior to or upon a fact-finding hearing, the court may upon a motion by the petitioner with the consent of the respondent and the child's attorney [or law guardian] or upon its own motion with the consent of the petitioner, the respondent and the child's attorney [or law guardian], order that the proceeding be "adjourned in contemplation of dismissal." Under no circumstances shall the court order any party to consent to an order under this section. The court may make such order only after it has apprised the respondent of the provisions of this section and it is satisfied that the respondent understands the effect of such provisions.

(b) An adjournment in contemplation of dismissal is an adjournment of the proceeding for a period not to exceed one year with a view to ultimate dismissal of the petition in furtherance of

justice. Upon the consent of the petitioner, the respondent and the child's attorney [or law guardian], the court may issue an order extending such period for such time and upon such conditions as may be agreeable to the parties.

(c) Such order may include terms and conditions agreeable to the parties and to the court, provided that such terms and conditions shall include a requirement that the child and the respondent be under the supervision of a child protective agency during the adjournment period. In any order issued pursuant to this section, such agency shall be directed to make a progress report to the court, the parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney on the implementation of such order, no later than ninety days after the issuance of such order, unless the court determines that the facts and circumstances of the case do not require such reports to be made. The child protective agency shall make further reports to the court, the parties and the [law guardian] child's attorney in such manner and at such times as the court may direct.

(d) Upon application of the respondent, the petitioner, the child's attorney [or law guardian] or upon the court's own motion, made at any time during the duration of the order, if the child protective agency has failed substantially to provide the respondent with adequate supervision or to observe the terms and conditions of the order, the court may direct the child protective agency to observe such terms and conditions and provide adequate supervision or may make any order authorized pursuant to section two hundred fifty-five of this act.

(e) Upon application of the petitioner or the child's attorney [or law guardian,] or upon the court's own motion, made at any time during the duration of the order, the court may restore the matter to the calendar, if the court finds after a hearing that the respondent has failed substantially to observe the terms and conditions of the order or to cooperate with the supervising child protective agency. In such event, unless the parties consent to an order pursuant to section one thousand fifty-one of this act or unless the petition is dismissed upon the consent of the petitioner, the court shall thereupon proceed to a fact-finding hearing under this article no later than sixty days after such application unless such period is extended by the court for good cause shown.

§60. Section 1039-a of the family court act, as amended by chapter 69 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

§1039-a. Procedures following adjournment in contemplation of dismissal. The local child protective service shall notify the child's [law guardian] attorney of an indicated report of child abuse

or maltreatment in which the respondent is a subject of the report or another person named in the report, as such terms are defined in section four hundred twelve of the social services law, while any order issued pursuant to section [ten hundred] one thousand thirty-nine or extension thereof remains in effect.

§61. Section 1042 of the family court act, as amended by section 4 of part B of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§1042. Effect of absence of parent or other person responsible for care. If the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care is not present, the court may proceed to hear a petition under this article only if the child is represented by counsel [, a law guardian, or a guardian ad litem]. The parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care shall be served with a copy of the order of disposition with written notice of its entry pursuant to section one thousand thirty-six of this article. Within one year of such service or substituted service pursuant to section one thousand thirty-six of this article, the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care may move to vacate the order of disposition and schedule a rehearing. Such motion shall be granted on an affidavit showing such relationship or responsibility and a meritorious defense to the petition, unless the court finds that the parent or other person willfully refused to appear at the hearing, in which case the court may deny the motion.

§62. Subdivision (b) of section 1048 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 141 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

(b) At the conclusion of a fact-finding hearing and after the court has made findings required before a dispositional hearing may commence, the court may on its own motion or motion of the respondent, the petitioner or the [law guardian] child's attorney order a reasonable adjournment of the proceedings[,] to enable the court to make inquiry into the surroundings, conditions[,] and capacities of the persons involved in the proceedings.

§63. Subdivision (a) of section 1051 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 160 of the laws of 1987, is amended to read as follows:

(a) If facts sufficient to sustain the petition are established in accord with part four of this article, or if all parties and the [law guardian] attorney for the child consent, the court shall, subject to the provisions of subdivision (c) of this section, enter an order finding that the child is an abused child or a neglected child and shall state the grounds for the finding.

§64. Section 1052-a of the family court act, as amended by chapter 69 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

§1052-a. Post-dispositional procedures. The local child protective service shall notify the child's [law guardian] attorney of an indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment in which the respondent is a subject of the report or another person named in the report, as such terms are defined in section four hundred twelve of the social services law, while any order issued pursuant to paragraph (i), (iii), (iv) or (v) of subdivision (a) of section [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-two remains in effect against the respondent.

§65. Subdivision (c) of section 1053 of the family court act, as added by chapter 323 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Except as provided for herein, in any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the child protective agency to make progress reports to the court, the parties, and the child's [law guardian] attorney on the implementation of such order. Where the order of disposition is issued upon the consent of the parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney, such agency shall report to the court, the parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney no later than ninety days after the issuance of the order, unless the court determines that the facts and circumstances of the case do not require such report to be made.

§66. Subdivision (a) of section 1054 of the family court act, as separately amended by chapters 206 and 323 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

(a) If the order of disposition releases the child to the custody of his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care at the time of the filing of the petition, the court may place the person to whose custody the child is released under supervision of a child protective agency or of a social services official or duly authorized agency, or may enter an order of protection under section [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-six, or both. An order of supervision entered under this section shall set forth the terms and conditions of such supervision that the respondent must meet and the actions that the child protective agency, social services official or duly authorized agency must take to exercise such supervision. Except as provided for herein, in any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the child protective agency to make progress reports to the court, the parties, and the child's [law guardian] attorney on the implementation of such order. Where the order of disposition is issued upon the consent of the parties and the child's [law

guardian] attorney, such agency shall report to the court, the parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney no later than ninety days after the issuance of the order, unless the court determines that the facts and circumstances of the case do not require such report to be made.

§67. Subparagraph (E) of paragraph (i) of subdivision (b) of section 1055 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

(E) where the permanency goal is return to the parent and it is anticipated that the child may be finally discharged to his or her parent before the next scheduled permanency hearing, the court may provide the local social services district with authority to finally discharge the child to the parent without further court hearing, provided that ten days prior written notice is served upon the court and [law guardian] child's attorney. If the court on its own motion or the [law guardian] child's attorney on motion to the court does not request the matter to be brought for review before final discharge, no further permanency hearings will be required. The local social services district may also discharge the child on a trial basis to the parent unless the court has prohibited such trial discharge or unless the court has conditioned such trial discharge on another event. For the purposes of this section, trial discharge shall mean that the child is physically returned to the parent while the child remains in the care and custody of the local social services district. Permanency hearings shall continue to be held for any child who has returned to his or her parents on a trial discharge. Where the permanency goal for a child aging out of foster care is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child, the local social services district may also discharge the child on a trial basis to the planned permanent living arrangements, unless the court has prohibited or otherwise conditioned such a trial discharge. Trial discharge for a child aging out of foster care shall mean that a child is physically discharged but the local social services district retains care and custody or custody and guardianship of the child and there remains a date certain for the scheduled permanency hearing. Children placed under this section shall be placed until the court completes the initial permanency hearing scheduled pursuant to article ten-A of this act. Should the court determine pursuant to article ten-A of this act that placement shall be extended beyond completion of the scheduled permanency hearing, such extended placement and any such successive extensions of placement shall expire at the completion of the next scheduled permanency hearing, unless the court shall determine, pursuant to article ten-A of this act, to continue to extend such placement.

§68. Subdivisions (a) and (c) of section 1055-a of the family court act, as added by section 19 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

(a) In case of a substantial failure of a material condition in a surrender executed pursuant to section three hundred eighty-three-c of the social services law prior to finalization of the adoption of the child, the court shall possess continuing jurisdiction in accordance with subdivision six of such section to rehear the matter upon the filing of a petition by the authorized agency, the parent or the [law guardian] attorney for the child or whenever the court deems necessary. In such case, the authorized agency shall notify the parent, unless such notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument, the [law guardian] attorney for the child and the court that approved the surrender within twenty days of any substantial failure to comply with a material condition of the surrender prior to the finalization of the adoption of the child. In such case, the authorized agency shall file a petition on notice to the parent unless notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument and the [law guardian] attorney for the child in accordance with this section within thirty days of such failure, except for good cause shown, in order for the court to review such failure and, where necessary, to hold a hearing; provided, however, that in the absence of such filing, the parent and/or [law guardian] attorney for the child may file such a petition at any time up to sixty days after notification of the failure. Such petition filed by a parent or [law guardian] child's attorney must be filed prior to the adoption of the child.

(c) Nothing in this section shall limit the rights and remedies available to the parties and the [law guardian] attorney for the child pursuant to section one hundred twelve-b of the domestic relations law with respect to a failure to comply with a material condition of a surrender subsequent to the finalization of the adoption of the child.

§69. Subdivision (c) of section 1055-b of the family court act, as added by chapter 519 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

(c) As part of the order granting custody or guardianship pursuant to article six of this act, the court may require that the local department of social services and the [law guardian] attorney for the child receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to modify the order of custody or guardianship granted pursuant to the article six proceeding.

§70. Section 1057 of the family court act, as separately amended by chapters 206 and 323 of

the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

§1057. Supervision. The court may place the respondent under supervision of a child protective agency or of a social services official or duly authorized agency. An order of supervision entered under this section shall set forth the terms and conditions of such supervision that the respondent must meet and the actions that the child protective agency, social services official or duly authorized agency must take to exercise such supervision. Except as provided for herein, in any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the child protective agency to make progress reports to the court, the parties, and the child's [law guardian] attorney on the implementation of such order. Where the order of disposition is issued upon the consent of the parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney, such agency shall report to the court, the parties and the child's [law guardian] attorney no later than ninety days after the issuance of the order, unless the court determines that the facts and circumstances of the case do not require such report to be made. Rules of court shall define permissible terms and conditions of supervision under this section. The duration of any period of supervision shall be for an initial period of no more than one year and the court may at the expiration of that period, upon a hearing and for good cause shown, make successive extensions of such supervision of up to one year each.

§71. Section 1058 of the family court act, as amended by section 20 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§1058. Expiration of orders. No later than sixty days prior to the expiration of an order issued pursuant to paragraph (i), (ii), (iv) or (v) of subdivision (a) of section one thousand fifty-two of this part or prior to the conclusion of the period of an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal pursuant to section one thousand thirty-nine of this article, where no application has been made seeking extension of such orders or adjournments and, with respect to an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, no violations of the court's order are before the court, the child protective agency shall, whether or not the child has been or will be returned to the family, report to the court, the parties, including any non-respondent parent and the child's [law guardian] attorney on the status and circumstances of the child and family and any actions taken or contemplated by such agency with respect to such child and family.

§72. Section 1063 of the family court act, as amended by section 22 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§1063. Service of motion; answer. A copy of a motion under section one thousand sixty-two of this part shall promptly be served by regular mail upon the duly authorized agency or the institution having custody of the child and upon the [law guardian] child's attorney, each of whose duty it is to file an answer to the motion within five days of the receipt of the motion.

§73. Section 1073 of the family court act, as added by chapter 962 of the laws of 1970, is amended to read as follows:

§1073. Effect of running away from place of placement. If a child placed under section one thousand fifty-five runs away from the place of placement the court may, after hearing, revoke the order of placement and make any order, including an order of placement, that might have been made at the time the order of placement was made. The court may require that the child be present at such hearing and shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent him or her.

§74. Section 1075 of the family court act, as added by chapter 316 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

§ 1075. Special duties of [law guardian] attorney for the child. In addition to all other duties and responsibilities necessary to the representation of a child who is the subject of a proceeding under this article, [a law guardian] an attorney for a child shall upon receipt of a report from a child protective agency pursuant to sections [ten hundred] one thousand thirty-nine, [ten hundred] one thousand thirty-nine-a, [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-two-a, [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-three, [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-four, [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-five, [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-seven and [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-eight, review the information contained therein and make a determination as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is at risk of further abuse or neglect or that there has been a substantive violation of a court order. Where the [law guardian] attorney for the child makes such a determination, the [law guardian] attorney shall apply to the court for appropriate relief pursuant to section [ten hundred] one thousand sixty-one. Nothing contained in this section shall relieve a child protective agency or social services official of its duties pursuant to this act or the social services law.

§75. Subdivision 4 of section 1081 of the family court act, as added by chapter 457 of the laws of 1988, is amended to read as follows:

4. The petition shall be served upon the respondent in a proceeding under this article, the local social services official having the care of the child, any grandparent or grandparents named in

the petition as having visitation rights conferred by court order pursuant to section seventy-two or two hundred forty of the domestic relations law, and upon the child's [law guardian] attorney. The petition shall be served in such manner as the court may direct.

§76. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 and subdivision 2 of section 1082 of the family court act, as added by chapter 457 of the laws of 1988, are amended to read as follows:

(b) The department, the [law guardian] child's attorney and the respondent in a proceeding under this article, shall have the right to be heard [in] with respect to a petition for an order to enforce visitation rights under this part.

2. Where the local department of social services or the [law guardian] child's attorney opposes a petition described in section one thousand eighty-one of this part, the department or the [law guardian] child's attorney as appropriate shall serve and file an answer to the petition. The court shall, upon the filing of such answer, set a date for a hearing on such petition and shall notify the parents, grandparent or grandparents, the department and the [law guardian] child's attorney of such hearing date.

§77. Subdivision 4 of section 1085 of the family court act, as added by chapter 378 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

4. For the purposes of making a determination pursuant to subparagraph (C) of paragraph (i) of subdivision one of this section, the court shall not be bound by the findings of fact, conclusions of law or ultimate conclusion as determined by the proceedings leading to the conviction of murder in the first or second degree in this state or of an offense in another jurisdiction which, if committed in this state, would constitute murder in either the first or second degree, of a parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, sibling, half-sibling or step-sibling of a child who is the subject of the proceeding. In all proceedings under this section, [a law guardian] an attorney shall be appointed for the child.

§78. Section 1088 of the family court act, as added by section 27 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§1088. Continuing court jurisdiction. If a child is placed pursuant to section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-four, or three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law or pursuant to section one thousand seventeen, one thousand twenty-two, one thousand twenty-seven or one thousand fifty-two of this act, or directly placed with a relative pursuant to section one thousand seventeen or one thousand fifty-five of this act; or if the child is freed for adoption pursuant to

section three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, the case shall remain on the court's calendar and the court shall maintain jurisdiction over the case until the child is discharged from placement and all orders regarding supervision, protection or services have expired. The court shall rehear the matter whenever it deems necessary or desirable, or upon motion by any party entitled to notice in proceedings under this article, or by the [law guardian] attorney for the child, and whenever a permanency hearing is required by this article. While the court maintains jurisdiction over the case, the provisions of section one thousand thirty-eight of this act shall continue to apply.

§79. Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of section 1089 of the family court act, as added by section 27 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(ii) the agency supervising the care of the child on behalf of the social services district with whom the child was placed, the child's [law guardian] attorney, and the attorney for the respondent parent.

§80. Clauses (C) and (G) of subparagraph (viii) of paragraph (2) of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act, clause (C) as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, clause (G) as added by section 27 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, are amended to read as follows:

(C) Where the permanency goal is return to parent and it is anticipated that the child may be returned home before the next scheduled permanency hearing, the court may provide the local social services district with authority to finally discharge the child to the parent without further court hearing, provided that ten days prior written notice is served upon the court and [law guardian] child's attorney. If the court on its own motion or the [law guardian] child's attorney on motion to the court does not request the matter to be brought for review before final discharge, no further permanency hearings will be required. The local social services district may also discharge the child on a trial basis to the parent unless the court has prohibited such trial discharge or unless the court has conditioned such trial discharge on another event. For the purposes of this section, trial discharge shall mean that the child is physically returned to the parent while the child remains in the care and custody of the local social services district. Permanency hearings shall continue to be held for any child who has returned to his or her parents on a trial discharge. Where the permanency goal for a child aging out of foster care is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a

significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the child, the local social services district may also discharge the child on a trial basis to the planned permanent living arrangements, unless the court has prohibited or otherwise conditioned such a trial discharge. Trial discharge for a child aging out of foster care shall mean that a child is physically discharged but the local social services district retains care and custody or custody and guardianship of the child and there remains a date certain for the scheduled permanency hearing.

(G) Except as provided for herein, in any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the local social services district or agency to make progress reports to the court, the parties, and the child's [law guardian] attorney on the implementation of such order.

§81. Subparagraph (B) of paragraph (iv) of subdivision (a) and subdivision (c) of section 1089-a of the family court act, as added by chapter 519 of the laws of 2008, are amended to read as follows:

(B) if the local department of social services, the [law guardian] attorney for the child, or the foster parent of the child who has been the foster parent for the child for one year or more fail to consent to the granting of custody or guardianship under article six of this act, the court finds that granting custody or guardianship of the child to the relative or suitable person is in the best interests of the child.

(c) As part of the order granting custody or guardianship to the relative or suitable person pursuant to article six of this act, the court may require that the local department of social services and the [law guardian] attorney for the child receive notice of and be made parties to any subsequent proceeding to modify the order of custody or guardianship granted pursuant to the article six proceeding.

§82. Subdivision (a) of section 1090 of the family court act, as added by section 27 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(a) If [a law guardian] an attorney for the child has been appointed by the family court in a proceeding pursuant to section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four, or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, or article ten of this act, the appointment of the [law guardian] attorney for the child shall continue without further court order or appointment, unless another appointment of [a law guardian] an attorney for the child has been made by the court, until the child is discharged from placement and all orders regarding

supervision, protection or services have expired. All notices, reports and motions required by law shall be provided to [such law guardian] the child's attorney. The [law guardian] child's attorney may be relieved of his or her representation upon application to the court for termination of the appointment. Upon approval of the application, the court shall immediately appoint another [law guardian] attorney to whom all notices, reports, and motions required by law shall be provided.

§83. Section 1113 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 461 of the laws of 1997, is amended to read as follows:

§1113. Time of appeal. An appeal under this article must be taken no later than thirty days after the service by a party or the [law guardian] child's attorney upon the appellant of any order from which the appeal is taken, thirty days from receipt of the order by the appellant in court or thirty-five days from the mailing of the order to the appellant by the clerk of the court, whichever is earliest.

All such orders shall contain the following statement in conspicuous print: "Pursuant to section 1113 of the family court act, an appeal must be taken within thirty days of receipt of the order by appellant in court, thirty-five days from the mailing of the order to the appellant by the clerk of the court, or thirty days after service by a party or [law guardian] attorney for the child upon the appellant, whichever is earliest." When service of the order is made by the court, the time to take an appeal shall not commence unless the order contains such statement and there is an official notation in the court record as to the date and the manner of service of the order.

§84. Subdivision (d) of section 1114 of the family court act, as added by chapter 417 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

(d) Any party to a child protective proceeding, or the [law guardian] attorney for the child, may apply to a justice of the appellate division for a stay of an order issued pursuant to part two of article ten of this chapter returning a child to the custody of a respondent. The party applying for the stay shall notify the attorneys for all parties and the [law guardian] attorney for the child of the time and place of such application. If requested by any party present, oral argument shall be had on the application, except for good cause stated upon the record. The party applying for the stay shall state in the application the errors of fact or law allegedly committed by the family court. A party applying to the court for the granting or continuation of such stay shall make every reasonable effort to obtain a complete transcript of the proceeding before the family court.

If a stay is granted, a schedule shall be set for an expedited appeal.

§85. Section 1115 of the family court act, as amended by section 29 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§1115. Notices of appeal. An appeal as of right shall be taken by filing the original notice of appeal with the clerk of the family court in which the order was made and from which the appeal is taken.

A notice of appeal shall be served on any adverse party as provided for in subdivision one of section five thousand five hundred fifteen of the civil practice law and rules and upon the [law guardian] child's attorney, if any. The appellant shall file two copies of such notice, together with proof of service, with the clerk of the family court who shall forthwith transmit one copy of such notice to the clerk of the appropriate appellate division or as otherwise required by such appellate division.

§86. Section 1118 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

§1118. Applicability of civil practice law and rules. The provisions of the civil practice law and rules apply where appropriate to appeals under this article, provided, however, that the fees required by section eight thousand twenty-two of the civil practice law and rules shall not be required where the attorney for the appellant or attorney for the movant, as applicable, certifies that such appellant or movant has been assigned counsel or [a law guardian] an attorney for a child pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine, two hundred sixty-two or eleven hundred twenty of this act or section seven hundred twenty-two of the county law, or is represented by a legal aid society or a legal services program or other nonprofit organization, which has as its primary purpose the furnishing of legal services to indigent persons, or by private counsel working on behalf of or under the auspices of such society or organization. Where the attorney for the appellant or the attorney for the movant certifies in accordance with procedures established by the appropriate appellate division that the appellant or movant has been represented in family court by assigned counsel or [a law guardian] an attorney for a child, pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine, two hundred sixty-two or eleven hundred twenty of this act or section seven hundred twenty-two of the county law, or is represented by a legal aid society or legal services program or some other nonprofit organization, which has as its primary purpose the furnishing of legal services to indigent persons, or by private

counsel working on behalf or under the auspices of such society or organization, and that the appellant, who has indicated an intention to appeal, or movant, continues to be eligible for assignment of counsel and, in the case of counsel assigned to represent an adult party, continues to be indigent, the appellant or movant shall be presumed eligible for poor person relief pursuant to section eleven hundred one of the civil practice law and rules and for assignment of counsel on appeal without further motion. The appointment of counsel and granting of poor person relief by the appellate division shall continue for the purpose of filing a notice of appeal or motion for leave to appeal to the court of appeals.

§87. The section heading and subdivisions (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) of section 1120 of the family court act, the section heading and subdivisions (b), (c) and (e) as amended by chapter 476 of the laws of 1988, subdivision (d) as amended by chapter 75 of the laws of 1991, and subdivision (f) as added by chapter 582 of the laws of 1991, are amended to read as follows:

Counsel [or law guardian] for children on appeal.

(b) Whenever [a law guardian] an attorney has been appointed by the family court pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine of this act to represent a child in a proceeding described therein, the appointment shall continue without further court order or appointment where (i) the [law guardian] attorney on behalf of the child files a notice of appeal, or (ii) where a party to the original proceeding files a notice of appeal. The [law guardian] attorney for the child may be relieved of his or her representation upon application to the court to which the appeal is taken for termination of the appointment. Upon approval of such application, the court shall appoint another [law guardian] attorney for the child.

(c) An appellate court may appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent a child in an appeal in a proceeding originating in the family court where [a law guardian] an attorney was not representing the child at the time of the entry of the order appealed from or at the time of the filing of the motion for permission to appeal and when independent legal representation is not available to such child.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to relieve [law guardians] attorneys for children of their duties pursuant to subdivision one of sections 354.2 and seven hundred sixty of this act.

(e) [Law guardians] An attorney appointed or continuing to represent a [person] child under this section shall be compensated and shall receive reimbursement for expenses reasonably incurred

in the same manner provided by section thirty-five of the judiciary law.

(f) In any case where [a law guardian] an attorney is or shall be representing a child in an appellate proceeding pursuant to subdivision (b) or (c) of this section, such [law guardian] attorney shall be served with a copy of the notice of appeal.

§88. Subdivisions 2, 3, 4 and 5 of section 1121 of the family court act, subdivisions 2 and 4 as added by chapter 582 of the laws of 1991, subdivisions 3 and 5 as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, are amended to read as follows:

2. Upon the filing of such order, it shall be the duty of counsel to the parties and the [law guardian] child to promptly advise the parties in writing of the right to appeal to the appropriate appellate division of the supreme court, the time limitations involved, the manner of instituting an appeal and obtaining a transcript of the testimony and the right to apply for leave to appeal as a poor person if the party is unable to pay the cost of an appeal. It shall be the further duty of such counsel [or law guardian] to explain to the client the procedures for instituting an appeal, the possible reasons upon which an appeal may be based and the nature and possible consequences of the appellate process.

3. It shall also be the duty of such counsel [or law guardian] to ascertain whether the party represented by such attorney wishes to appeal and, if so, to serve and file the necessary notice of appeal and, as applicable, to apply for leave to appeal as a poor person, to file a certification of continued eligibility for appointment of counsel pursuant to section eleven hundred eighteen of this article, and to submit such other documents as may be required by the appropriate appellate division.

4. If the party has been permitted to waive the appointment of [a law guardian or] counsel appointed pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine-a or two hundred sixty-two of this act, it shall be the duty of the court to advise the party of the right to the appointment of [a law guardian or] counsel for the purpose of filing an appeal.

5. Where a party wishes to appeal, it shall also be the duty of such counsel [or law guardian], where appropriate, to apply for assignment of counsel for such party pursuant to applicable provisions of this act, the judiciary law and the civil practice law and rules, and to file a certification of continued eligibility for appointment of counsel and, in the case of counsel assigned to represent an adult party, continued indigency, pursuant to section [eleven] one thousand one hundred eighteen of this article, and to submit such other documents as may be required by the appropriate appellate

division.

§89. Section 2306 of the public health law, as amended by chapter 512 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

§2306. Sexually transmissible diseases; reports and information, confidential. All reports or information secured by a board of health or health officer under the provisions of this article shall be confidential except in so far as is necessary to carry out the purposes of this article. Such report or information may be disclosed by court order in a criminal proceeding in which it is otherwise admissible or in a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act in which it is otherwise admissible, to the prosecution and to the defense, or in a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act in which it is otherwise admissible, to the petitioner, respondent and [law guardian] attorney for the child, provided that the subject of the report or information has waived the confidentiality provided for by this section. A person waives the confidentiality provided for by this section if such person voluntarily discloses or consents to disclosure of such report or information or a portion thereof. If such person lacks the capacity to consent to such a waiver, his or her parent, guardian or [law guardian] attorney may so consent. An order directing disclosure pursuant to this section shall specify that no report or information shall be disclosed pursuant to such order which identifies or relates to any person other than the subject of the report or information.

§90. Paragraph (p) of subdivision 1 of section 2782 of the public health law, as added by chapter 592 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

(p) [a law guardian,] an attorney appointed to represent a minor pursuant to the social services law or the family court act, with respect to confidential HIV related information relating to the minor and for the purpose of representing the minor. If the minor has the capacity to consent, the [law guardian] minor's attorney may not redisclose confidential HIV related information without the minor's permission. If the minor lacks capacity to consent, the [law guardian] minor's attorney may redisclose confidential HIV related information for the sole purpose of representing the minor. This paragraph shall not limit [a law guardian's] the ability of the minor's attorney to seek relief under section twenty-seven hundred eighty-five of this chapter.

§91. Subdivision 6 and paragraphs (b) and (c) of subdivision 10 of section 358-a of the social services law, subdivision 6 as amended by chapter 78 of the laws of 1978, paragraphs (b) and (c) of subdivision 10 as added by chapter 457 of the laws of 1988, are amended to read as follows:

(6) Representation. In any case where a hearing is directed by the family court judge, he [may in his discretion,] or she shall, pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine of the family court act, appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent the child, who shall be [an attorney] admitted to practice law in the state of New York.

(b) Where a social services official or the [law guardian of] attorney for the child[, if any,] opposes incorporation of an order, judgment or agreement conferring visitation rights as provided for in paragraph (e) of subdivision two of section three hundred eighty-four-a of this chapter, the social services official or [law guardian] attorney for the child shall apply for an order determining that the provisions of such order, judgment or agreement should not be incorporated into the instrument executed pursuant to such section. Such order shall be granted upon a finding, based on competent, relevant and material evidence, that the child's life or health would be endangered by incorporation and enforcement of visitation rights as described in such order, judgment or agreement. Otherwise, the court shall deny such application.

(c) Where visitation rights pursuant to an order, judgment or agreement are incorporated in an instrument, the parties may agree to an alternative schedule of visitation equivalent to and consistent with the original or modified visitation order, judgment or agreement where such alternative schedule reflects changed circumstances of the parties and is consistent with the best interests of the child. In the absence of such an agreement between the parties, the court may, in its discretion, upon application of any party or the child's [law guardian] attorney, order an alternative schedule of visitation, as described herein, where it determines that such schedule is necessary to facilitate visitation and to protect the best interests of the child.

§92. Subdivision 3 of section 372 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 394 of the laws of 1993, is amended to read as follows:

3. Such records maintained by the department or an authorized agency, including a local social services district, regarding such children are confidential, provided, however, that such records are subject to the provisions of article thirty-one of the civil practice law and rules. When either the subject foster child, or such child's parent, or such child's guardian if any, is not a party to the action, a copy of the notice or motion for discovery shall be served upon such parent, guardian, and child and, if the child is still a minor, the child's [law guardian] attorney. Such persons may thereafter appear in the action with regard to such discovery. Where no action is pending, upon application by

a parent, relative or legal guardian of such child or by an authorized agency, after due notice to the institution or authorized agency affected and hearing had thereon, the supreme court may by order direct the officers of such institution or authorized agency to furnish to such parent, relative, legal guardian or authorized agency such extracts from the record relating to such child as the court may deem proper. The department through its authorized agents and employees may examine at all reasonable times the records required by this section to be kept.

§93. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 2 and subparagraphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph (c) of subdivision 5 of section 383-c of the social services law, paragraph (b) of subdivision 2 as added by section 41 and subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (c) of subdivision 5 as amended by section 43 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, and subparagraph (i) of paragraph (c) of subdivision 5 as amended by chapter 76 of the laws of 2002, are amended to read as follows:

(b) If a surrender instrument designates a particular person or persons who will adopt a child, such person or persons, the child's birth parent or parents, the authorized agency having care and custody of the child and the child's [law guardian] attorney, may enter into a written agreement providing for communication or contact between the child and the child's parent or parents on such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the parties. If a surrender instrument does not designate a particular person or persons who will adopt the child, then the child's birth parent or parents, the authorized agency having care and custody of the child and the child's [law guardian] attorney may enter into a written agreement providing for communication or contact, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the parties. Such agreement also may provide terms and conditions for communication with or contact between the child and the child's biological siblings or half-siblings, if any. If any such sibling or half-sibling is fourteen years of age or older, such terms and conditions shall not be enforceable unless such sibling or half-sibling consents to the agreement in writing. If the court before which the surrender instrument is presented for approval determines that the agreement concerning communication and contact is in the child's best interests, the court shall approve the agreement. If the court does not approve the agreement, the court may nonetheless approve the surrender; provided, however, that the birth parent or parents executing the surrender instrument shall be given the opportunity at that time to withdraw such instrument. Enforcement of any agreement prior to the adoption of the child shall be in accordance with subdivision (b) of section one thousand fifty-five-a of the family court act. Subsequent to the adoption of the child,

enforcement of any agreement shall be in accordance with section one hundred twelve-b of the domestic relations law.

(i) the authorized agency shall notify the parent, unless such notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument, the [law guardian] attorney for the child and the court that approved the surrender within twenty days of any substantial failure of a material condition of the surrender prior to the finalization of the adoption of the child; and

(ii) except for good cause shown, the authorized agency shall file a petition on notice to the parent unless notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument and [law guardian] the child's attorney in accordance with section one thousand fifty-five-a of the family court act within thirty days of such failure, in order for the court to review such failure and, where necessary, to hold a hearing; provided, however, that, in the absence of such filing, the parent and/or [law guardian] attorney for the child may file such a petition at any time up to sixty days after notification of the failure. Such petition filed by a parent or [law guardian] attorney for the child must be filed prior to the child's adoption [of the child]; and

§94. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 2 and paragraphs (i) and (ii) of the closing paragraph of subdivision 3 of section 384 of the social services law, paragraph (b) of subdivision 2 as added by section 48 and subparagraph (ii) of the closing paragraph of subdivision 3 as amended by section 49 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, and subparagraph (i) of the closing paragraph of subdivision 3 as added by chapter 76 of the laws of 2002, are amended to read as follows:

(b) If a surrender instrument designates a particular person or persons who will adopt a child, such person or persons, the child's birth parent or parents, the authorized agency having care and custody of the child and the child's [law guardian] attorney, may enter into a written agreement providing for communication or contact between the child and the child's parent or parents on such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the parties.

If a surrender instrument does not designate a particular person or persons who will adopt the child, then the child's birth parent or parents, the authorized agency having care and custody of the child and the child's [law guardian] attorney may enter into a written agreement providing for communication or contact, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the parties. Such agreement also may provide terms and conditions for communication with or contact between the

child and the child's biological sibling or half-sibling, if any. If any such sibling or half-sibling is fourteen years of age or older, such terms and conditions shall not be enforceable unless such sibling or half-sibling consents to the agreement in writing. If the court before which the surrender instrument is presented for approval determines that the agreement concerning communication and contact is in the child's best interests, the court shall approve the agreement. If the court does not approve the agreement, the court may nonetheless approve the surrender; provided, however, that the birth parent or parents executing the surrender instrument shall be given the opportunity at that time to withdraw such instrument. Enforcement of any agreement prior to the adoption of the child shall be in accordance with subdivision (b) of section one thousand fifty-five-a of the family court act. Subsequent to the adoption of the child, enforcement of any agreement shall be in accordance with section one hundred twelve-b of the domestic relations law.

(i) the authorized agency shall notify the parent, unless such notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument, the [law guardian] attorney for the child and the court that approved the surrender within twenty days of any substantial failure of a material condition of the surrender prior to the finalization of the adoption of the child; and

(ii) except for good cause shown, the authorized agency shall file a petition on notice to the parent unless notice is expressly waived by a statement written by the parent and appended to or included in such instrument and [law guardian] the child's attorney in accordance with section one thousand fifty-five-a of the family court act within thirty days of such failure, in order for the court to review such failure and, where necessary, to hold a hearing; provided, however, that, in the absence of such filing, the parent and/or [law guardian] attorney for the child may file such a petition at any time up to sixty days after notification of such failure. Such petition filed by a parent or [law guardian] attorney for the child must be filed prior to the child's adoption [of the child]; and

§95. Paragraph (f) of subdivision 2 of section 384-a of the social services law, as added by chapter 457 of the laws of 1988, is amended to read as follows:

(f) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prohibit a social services official or [a law guardian of] an attorney for the child, if any, from making an application to modify the terms of a visitation order, incorporated pursuant to this section, for good cause shown, upon notice to all interested parties, or to limit the right of a non-custodial parent or grandparent to seek visitation

pursuant to applicable provisions of law.

§96. Paragraphs (b), (c) and (c-1) and subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (l) of subdivision 3 of section 384-b of the social services law, paragraph (b) as amended by section 55 of part A of chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, paragraph (c) as amended and paragraph (c-1) as added by chapter 185 of the laws of 2006, subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (l) as added by chapter 7 of the laws of 1999, are amended to read as follows:

(b) A proceeding under this section may be originated by an authorized agency or by a foster parent authorized to do so pursuant to section one thousand eighty-nine of the family court act or by a relative with care and custody of the child or, if an authorized agency ordered by the court to originate a proceeding under this section fails to do so within the time fixed by the court, by a [law guardian] the child's attorney or guardian ad litem [of the child] on the court's direction.

(c) Where a child was placed or continued in foster care pursuant to article ten or ten-A of the family court act or section three hundred fifty-eight-a of this chapter, a proceeding under this section shall be originated in the family court in the county in which the proceeding pursuant to article ten or ten-A of the family court act or section three hundred fifty-eight-a of this chapter was last heard and shall be assigned, wherever practicable, to the judge who last heard such proceeding. Where multiple proceedings are commenced under this section concerning a child and one or more siblings or half-siblings of such child, placed or continued in foster care with the same commissioner pursuant to section one thousand fifty-five or one thousand eighty-nine of the family court act, all of such proceedings may be commenced jointly in the family court in any county which last heard a proceeding under article ten or ten-A of the family court act regarding any of the children who are the subjects of the proceedings under this section. In such instances, the case shall be assigned, wherever practicable, to the judge who last presided over such proceeding. In any other case, a proceeding under this section, including a proceeding brought in the surrogate's court, shall be originated in the county where either of the parents of the child reside at the time of the filing of the petition, if known, or, if such residence is not known, in the county in which the authorized agency has an office for the regular conduct of business or in which the child resides at the time of the initiation of the proceeding. To the extent possible, the court shall, when appointing [a law guardian] an attorney for the child, appoint [a law guardian] an attorney who has previously represented the child.

(c-1) Before hearing a petition under this section, the court in which the termination of parental rights petition has been filed shall ascertain whether the child is under the jurisdiction of a family court pursuant to a placement in a child protective or foster care proceeding or continuation in out-of-home care pursuant to a permanency hearing and, if so, which court exercised jurisdiction over the most recent proceeding. If the court determines that the child is under the jurisdiction of a different family court, the court in which the termination of parental rights petition was filed shall stay its proceeding for not more than thirty days and shall communicate with the court that exercised jurisdiction over the most recent proceeding. The communication shall be recorded or summarized on the record by the court in which the termination of parental rights petition was filed. Both courts shall notify the parties and [law guardian] child's attorney, if any, in their respective proceedings and shall give them an opportunity to present facts and legal argument or to participate in the communication prior to the issuance of a decision on jurisdiction. The court that exercised jurisdiction over the most recent proceeding shall determine whether it will accept or decline jurisdiction over the termination of parental rights petition. This determination of jurisdiction shall be incorporated into an order regarding jurisdiction that shall be issued by the court in which the termination of parental rights petition was filed within thirty days of such filing. If the court that exercised jurisdiction over the most recent proceeding determines that it should exercise jurisdiction over the termination of parental rights petition, the order shall require that the petition shall be transferred to that court forthwith but in no event more than thirty-five days after the filing of the petition. The petition shall be assigned, wherever practicable, to the judge who heard the most recent proceeding. If the court that exercised jurisdiction over the most recent proceeding declines to exercise jurisdiction over the adoption petition, the court in which the termination of parental rights petition was filed shall issue an order incorporating that determination and shall proceed forthwith.

(iv) In the event that the social services official or authorized agency having care and custody of the child fails to file a petition to terminate parental rights within sixty days of the time required by this section, or within ninety days of a court direction to file a proceeding not otherwise required by this section, such proceeding may be filed by the foster parent of the child without further court order or by the [law guardian] attorney for the child on the direction of the court. In the event of such filing the social services official or authorized agency having care and custody of the child shall be served with notice of the proceeding and shall join the petition.

§97. Subdivision 4 of section 409-e of the social services law, as amended by chapter 725 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

4. In accordance with regulations of the department, relevant portions of the assessment of the child and family circumstances, including₂ but not limited to the material described in paragraph (d) of subdivision one of this section, and a complete copy of the family service plan, established pursuant to subdivisions one and two, respectively, of this section shall be given to the child's parent or guardian, counsel for such parent or guardian, and the child's [law guardian] attorney, if any, within ten days of preparation of any such plan.

§98. Subdivision 1 of section 409-f of the social services law, as amended by chapter 725 of the laws of 1992 and as designated by chapter 653 of the laws of 1995, is amended to read as follows:

1. With respect to each child described in subdivision one of section four hundred nine-e of this title, the social services district shall establish and maintain a uniform case record, consisting of the assessment, the family service plan, descriptions of care, maintenance or services provided to such child and family and the dates provided, essential data relating to the identification and history of such child and family, all official documents and records of any judicial or administrative proceedings relating to the district's contact with the child and family, and such other records as the department may by regulation require to adequately review case management by the districts. The department shall by regulation specify the format and contents of the uniform case record. Such regulation shall be developed with the participation of the child welfare standards advisory council established pursuant to section four hundred nine-h of this chapter and in consultation with public and voluntary authorized agencies, citizens' groups and concerned individuals and organizations, including the state council on children and families. The uniform case record shall be maintained by the district in a manner consistent with the confidential nature of such records and shall be made available in accordance with applicable provisions of law. When a hearing has been requested in accordance with section twenty-two of this chapter, a copy of the portions of the record relevant to the hearing shall also be made available to the child's parent or guardian, counsel for the parent or guardian, and, if participating in the hearing, the child's [law guardian] attorney.

§99. Subparagraphs (r) and (t) of paragraph (A) of subdivision 4 of section 422 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 12 of the laws of 1996, are amended to read as follows:

(r) in relation to a report involving a child in residential care, the director or operator of the residential facility or program and, as appropriate, the local social services commissioner or school district placing the child, the division for youth, the department of education, the commission on quality of care for the mentally disabled, the office of mental health, the office of mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and any [law guardian] attorney appointed to represent the child whose appointment has been continued by a family court judge during the term of the placement, subject to the limitations contained in subdivisions nine and ten of this section and subdivision five of section four hundred twenty-four-c of this title;

(t) [a law guardian] an attorney for a child, appointed pursuant to the provisions of section [ten hundred] one thousand sixteen of the family court act, at any time such appointment is in effect, in relation to any report in which the respondent in the proceeding in which the [law guardian] attorney for a child has been appointed is the subject or another person named in the report, pursuant to sections [ten hundred] one thousand thirty-nine-a and [ten hundred] one thousand fifty-two-a of the family court act;

§100. This act shall take effect immediately.

11. Support obligations of indigent and near-indigent support obligors, stipulations and agreements in child support cases and authority to direct establishment of trusts to benefit children (D.R.L. §240(1-b); F.C.A. §413(1))

The legislative framework for determining child support in both the Family Court Act and Domestic Relations Law contains several gaps and ambiguities. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is recommending changes in subdivision one of Family Court Act §413 and subdivision (1-b) of section 240 of the Domestic Relations Law that will enhance the ability of Family and Supreme Courts to make orders and approve settlements in child support matters that will fully meet the needs of children.

First, the Committee's proposal would address the statutory provisions regarding indigent support obligors and those whose incomes are above the level of indigency but within the amount which a support obligor needs to live (the "self-support reserve"). In 1993, the New York State Court of Appeals, in Rose v. Moody, 83 N.Y.2d 65, 607 N.Y.S.2d 906 (1993), *cert. denied*, 511 U.S. 1084 (1994), held subdivision (1-b) of section 240 of the Domestic Relations Law and subdivision one of section 413 of the Family Court Act unconstitutional insofar as these provisions impose an inflexible minimum child support obligation against support obligors whose income would, by virtue of the obligation, fall below the poverty level. The Court ruled that the irrebuttable presumption mandating that an indigent, non-custodial parent would be ordered to pay a minimum of \$25 per month in child support contravened the Federal *Child Support Enforcement Act* [*Social Security Act*, Title IV-D §467(b)(2), *as amended*, 42 U.S.C.A. §667(b)(2)], thus violating the constitutional principle of Federal preemption. While the effect of the Court's ruling has been to require that support obligors be permitted to rebut the presumption in favor of a minimum obligation of \$25 per month, the statutory language has not been conformed accordingly.

Compounding the infirmity identified in Rose v. Moody, the statutes contain ambiguous provisions leading to anomalous, unintended results. Both subdivision (1)(d) of section 413 of the Family Court Act and subdivision (1-b)(d) of section 240 of the of the Domestic Relations Law provide that "where the annual amount of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income below the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, the basic child support obligation shall be twenty-five dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's income and the self-support reserve, whichever is greater." A literal reading of this provision as applied to an indigent non-custodial parent would compel the conclusion that the child support obligation would constitute the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self- support reserve in virtually all instances, as that figure would generally be greater than \$25 per month. For example, a non-custodial parent with no income would be ordered to pay \$14,040 in child support, since the difference between \$0 and the self-support reserve (\$14,040 annually, the level in 2008) is \$14,040, a greater amount than \$25 per month (\$300 annually).

Application of a literal reading of these provisions produces anomalous results clearly contrary to the legislative intent of the *Child Support Standards Act*. Subdivision (1)(d) of section 413 of the Family Court Act and subdivision (1-b)(d) of section 240 of the Domestic Relations Law

provide a two-step process for determining the support obligation for an indigent non-custodial parent. Where the basic child support obligation would reduce the income below the poverty level, the basic child support obligation is \$25 per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self-support reserve, whichever is greater. Where the basic child support obligation would reduce the income below the self-support reserve but still above the poverty level, the basic child support obligation is \$50 per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self-support reserve, whichever is greater. The obvious intent of the provisions is to require non-custodial parents to pay a minimum of \$50 per month when their incomes are at or above the self-support reserve and anywhere between \$25 and \$50 per month when their incomes are below the self-support reserve. However, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, which is charged under subdivision 2 of section 111-i of the Social Services Law to annually promulgate a child support standards chart, has interpreted these subdivisions to require an obligation of less than \$50 per month in several situations where the income is actually above the self-support reserve. According to OCSE's interpretation, the more children a non-custodial parent has in common with the custodial parent, the more likely it is that the non-custodial parent's monthly support obligation will be \$25 instead of \$50. For example, if a non-custodial parent with one child has an annual income at the self-support reserve (\$14,040), the basic child support obligation (17% of income) of \$2,387 would reduce the income to \$11,653. Since that income is just above the poverty level (\$10,400 in 2008), then the support obligation would be \$50 per month. However, if the same non-custodial parent had five children, the basic child support obligation (35% of income) would be \$4,914, which would reduce the income to \$9,126 annually. Since that amount is below the poverty level, the non-custodial parent, according to the OCSE interpretation, would only be obligated to pay \$25 per month. Surely the legislature never intended that a custodial parent struggling to raise five children would receive less support from the non-custodial parent than a custodial parent raising only one child.

Additionally, subdivision (1)(d) of section 413 of the Family Court Act and subdivision (1-b)(d) of section 240 of the Domestic Relations Law are silent regarding whether separate amounts may also be ordered in such cases for child care, future medical and educational expenses, in accordance with subparagraphs four, five, six and seven of paragraph (c) of both subdivision one of section 413 of the Family Court Act and subdivision (1-b) of section 240 of the Domestic Relations Law. Several cases have, therefore, disallowed the inclusion of any of these expenses as part of the child support order in such circumstances. See Callen v. Callen, 287 A.D.2d 818 (3rd Dept., 2001); In Re Rhianna R., 256 A.D.2d 1184 (4th Dept., 1998)[citing Matter of Cary (Mahady) v. Megerell, 219 A.D.2d 334 (3rd Dept., 1996), *lve. app. dismissed*, 88 N.Y.2d 1065 (1996)]; Dunbar v. Dunbar, 233 A.D.2d 922 (4th Dept., 1996). In cases where imposition of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income to an amount below the self-support reserve but above the poverty level, the Court should be authorized in appropriate circumstances to direct payments for child care, educational and health care expenses, as part of its child support order. These expenses may be significant and there is no reason that custodial parents, who may also be near-indigent, should be required to shoulder them alone.

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee's proposal would correct these anomalies and codify the decision in Rose v. Moody. The proposal would make the presumption in favor of a

minimum order of \$25 per month rebuttable by a showing that such an order would be unjust or inappropriate, based upon the ten factors applicable to departures from the child support standards. *See Domestic Relations Law §240(1-b)(f); Family Court Act §413(1)(f)*. The Family or Supreme Court would thus be authorized to order payment of an amount it deems to be just and appropriate. It would eliminate the proviso that "[i]n no instance shall the court order child support below \$25 per month."

Further, the proposal would require that where a non-custodial parent's income is at or above the self-support reserve and the basic child support obligation would reduce the income to an amount below the self support reserve but above the poverty level, the support obligation would be the difference between the self-support reserve or \$600 annually (\$50 monthly), whichever is greater, unless such an obligation would reduce the income below the poverty level, in which case the obligation would be the difference between the income and the poverty level, or \$300 annually (\$25 monthly), whichever is greater. If the non-custodial parent's income is at or below the self support reserve, the obligation would be \$300 annually (\$25 monthly).

Moreover, in cases where imposition of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income to an amount below the self-support reserve, but not the poverty level, the proposal would clarify that the Court would be authorized, although not required, to direct payments for child care, educational and health care expenses, as part of its child support order. Without contribution from non-indigent support obligors, custodial parents are often left with enormous expenditures in these three areas, costs that create a severe imbalance in the allocation of the costs of raising their children.

A second area in which statutory clarification would be helpful is in the area of stipulations and agreements for child support. Section 413(1)(h) of the Family Court Act and section 240(1-b)(h) of the Domestic Relations Law provide three important protections for children when their parents enter into agreements and stipulations for the payment and receipt of child support. Validly executed agreements and stipulations entered into by the parties and presented to the Supreme or Family Court for incorporation into orders or judgments must include a statement that the parties were advised of the provisions of the *Child Support Standards Act (CSSA)*, as well as a statement that the "basic child support obligation" (application of the *CSSA* percentages to the parties' combined parental income) would "presumptively result in the correct amount of child support to be awarded." Where the agreement or stipulation is at variance with the "basic child support obligation," a statement must also be included of what the presumptive amount would have been and why the deviation from that amount is appropriate. These protections are not waivable by the parties or their attorneys and render agreements not in compliance with these requirements void, not simply voidable. *See Scheinberg, "Inconsistent Appellate Enforcement of the Recital Requirements in DRL §240(1-b)(h)," 39 Fam. Law Rev. #3:3 (NYS Bar Assoc., Summer/Fall, 2007)*. However, the law is silent regarding the procedures to be followed and the remedies for noncompliance with these mandates, which has led to disparate interpretations in different parts of New York State. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing legislation to supply necessary clarity to this area.

The Committee's proposal would amend both Family Court Act §413(1)(h) and Domestic Relations Law §240(1-b)(h) to provide that if an agreement or stipulation fails to comply with any of

the three provisions, it must be deemed void as of the earlier of the date that one of the parties alleged the noncompliance in a pleading or motion or the date the Court made a finding of noncompliance. This approach is consistent with that of the Appellate Division, Third Department, which, in Clark v. Liska, 263 A.D.2d 640, 692 N.Y.S.2d 825 (3d Dept., 1999), treated a motion to vacate a stipulation on the ground of noncompliance with these requirements as a prospective modification of the parties' obligations. Noting that retroactive vacatur of the agreement would negatively affect the accumulated child support arrears owed by defendant, the cancellation of which is generally prohibited,⁴⁸ the Court affirmed the modification date as the date of the application. *See also Luisi v. Luisi*, 6 A.D.3d 398 (2d Dept., 2004). *Cf.*, Jefferson v. Jefferson, 21 A.D.3d 879, 800N.Y.S.2d 612 (2d Dept., 2005)(noncompliance with *CSSA* rendered agreement invalid and unenforceable; matter remitted for new determination of child support retroactive to the original date of the agreement).

Further, the Committee's proposal requires that upon a finding of noncompliance, the Court must hold a hearing to determine an appropriate amount of child support as of the earlier of the date the noncompliance had been asserted in a pleading or a motion or the date of the Court's finding of noncompliance. Concomitantly, the proposal provides that the noncompliance with the *CSSA* may not be asserted as a defense to non-payment of child support in violation of an agreement or stipulation for a period prior to the assertion of noncompliance in a motion or pleading or judicial determination of noncompliance, whichever was earlier.

Additionally, the proposal would remedy the gap noted by the Appellate Division, Second Department in Matter of Savini v. Burgaleta, 34 A.D.3d 686 (2d Dept., 2006), *i.e.*, that, unless precluded by the Supreme Court, the Family Court should be considered a court of competent jurisdiction that would have subject matter jurisdiction to review, determine and, where necessary, vacate or modify, not simply enforce, child support in cases in which a divorce judgment did not conform to the *Child Support Standards Act*. *See* Schub, "Outside Counsel: Family Court: Challenging Illegal Child Support Facts?," *N.Y. Law Journal*, Apr. 2, 2007, p.4, col. 4; Scheinberg, *supra*, at 5-6.

In light of the ambiguity surrounding the law in this area and, in particular, the varying approaches taken by the courts regarding the treatment of agreements and stipulations deemed not to comply with the *Child Support Standards Act*, the Committee's proposal will provide needed clarification. In so doing, it will spur greater compliance with the *CSSA*, thus fulfilling the legislative intent of providing appropriate support for children.

Finally, the *Child Support Standards Act* provides helpful parameters for Family and Supreme Courts to utilize to ensure that parents are assessed an appropriate proportion of their incomes for the support of their children, premised on the assumption that the incomes are relatively constant. However, it provides no mechanism for the courts to address the not-infrequent situation where one of the parents receives an economic windfall or exceptionally high income during a short period of time, an income not likely to remain at that level in the future. Examples include

⁴⁸ *See, e.g., Matter of Dox v. Tynon*, 90 N.Y. 2d 166, 659 N.Y.S.2d 231 (1997).

professional athletes or performers, individuals who sell a successful business or those who win significant awards. Without a means of preserving a portion of the windfall income for children's future needs, the courts are hampered in their ability to provide just and appropriate child support orders that incorporate future costs, such as college expenses. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, therefore, is recommending that the courts be authorized to direct that children be permitted to benefit from such windfalls through the establishment of designated accounts, such as trust funds or annuities, that would provide the children with future streams of payments, thus ensuring adequate support even after the non-custodial parent's income has decreased.

While explicitly not diminishing the non-custodial parent's basic support obligation and in no way superseding the issuance of orders for periodic payments pursuant to the *Child Support Standards Act*, the proposal would authorize the Supreme or Family Court, under such terms and conditions as it deems appropriate, to direct the non-custodial parent to pay an amount to establish a security account designated for the benefit of the child, including, but not limited to, a trust account or annuity, to meet the child's future needs. The proposal would require the Court to specify the parameters of the account, including, as applicable, the particular purposes of the account; the person or entity that will act as trustee, custodian or administrator of the funds in the account; the person or entity that will act as the trustee, custodian or administrator of the funds in the account in the event of the death of the designated trustee, custodian or administrator; the disposition of the funds after the emancipation or death of the child or children named as beneficiaries; the particular structure that will fulfill the purposes of the account; and any further provisions necessary to accomplish the purpose of the account.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the domestic relations law and the family court act, in relation to the child support obligation of indigent non-custodial parents, stipulations of child support and authority to direct establishment of trust funds to benefit children

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 1-b of section 240 of the domestic relations law is amended by adding a new subparagraph (8) and paragraphs (d), (g), (h) and (i) of such subdivision, paragraphs (d) and (i) as added by chapter 567 of the laws of 1989 and paragraphs (g) and (h) as amended by chapter 41 of the laws of 1992, are amended to read as follows:

(8) In addition to the basic child support obligation ordered under this subdivision, the court may, in its discretion, order the respondent to pay an amount to establish a security account designated for the benefit of the child, including, but not limited to, a trust account or annuity to meet the child's future needs. The court may direct the establishment of such an account under such

terms and conditions as it deems appropriate. The court shall set forth, as applicable: the specific purposes of the account; the person or entity that will act as trustee, custodian or administrator of the funds in the account; the person or entity that will act as the trustee, custodian or administrator of the funds in the account in the event of the death of the designated trustee, custodian or administrator; the disposition of the funds after the emancipation or death of the child or children named as beneficiaries; the particular structure that will fulfill the purposes of the account; and any further provisions necessary to accomplish the purpose of the account. The establishment of such an account shall not diminish any current child support obligations.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (c) of this subdivision[,where]:

(i) If the non-custodial parent's income is above the self-support reserve, but the annual amount of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income below the self-support reserve, but above the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, the basic child support obligation shall be [twenty-five] fifty dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self-support reserve, whichever is greater [. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (c) of this subdivision, where the annual amount of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income] , in addition to any amounts that the court may, in its discretion, order in accordance with subparagraphs four, five, six and/or seven of paragraph (c) of this subdivision.

(ii) If the non-custodial parent's annual income is at or below the self-support reserve, but [not below] above the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, the basic child support obligation shall be fifty dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self-support reserve, whichever is greater, unless such an obligation would reduce the non-custodial parents income below the poverty guidelines amount for a single person. In such a case, the basic child support obligation shall be twenty-five dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly poverty guidelines amount for a single person, whichever is greater, provided, however, that if the court finds that such basic child support obligation is unjust or inappropriate, which finding shall be based upon consideration of the factors set forth in paragraph (f) of this subdivision, the court shall order the non-custodial parent to pay such amount of the child

support as the court finds just and appropriate.

(iii) If the non-custodial parent's annual income is at or below the poverty guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, the basic child support obligation shall be twenty-five dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly poverty guidelines amount for a single person, whichever is greater, provided, however, that if the court finds that such basic child support obligation is unjust or inappropriate, which finding shall be based upon consideration of the factors set forth in paragraph (f) of this subdivision, the court shall order the non-custodial parent to pay such amount of the child support as the court finds just and appropriate.

(g) Where the court finds that the non-custodial parent's pro rata share of the basic child support obligation is unjust or inappropriate, the court shall order the non-custodial parent to pay such amount of child support as the court finds just and appropriate, and the court shall set forth, in a written order, the factors it considered; the amount of each party's pro rata share of the basic child support obligation; and the reasons that the court did not order the basic child support obligation. Such written order may not be waived by either party or counsel; provided, however, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, the court shall not find that the non-custodial parent's pro rata share of such obligation is unjust or inappropriate on the basis that such share exceeds the portion of a public assistance grant which is attributable to a child or children. [In no instance shall the court order child support below twenty-five dollars per month.] Where the non-custodial parent's income is less than or equal to the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, unpaid child support arrears in excess of five hundred dollars shall not accrue.

(h) (1) A validly executed agreement or stipulation voluntarily entered into between the parties after the effective date of this subdivision presented to the court for incorporation in an order or judgment shall include the following:

(i) a provision stating that the parties have been advised of the provisions of this subdivision, and

(ii) a provision stating that the basic child support obligation provided for therein would presumptively result in the correct amount of child support to be awarded.

(2) In the event that such agreement or stipulation deviates from the basic child support

obligation, the agreement or stipulation must specify the amount that such basic child support obligation would have been and the reason or reasons that such agreement or stipulation does not provide for payment of that amount.

(3) Such provision may not be waived by either party or counsel.

(4) Nothing contained in this subdivision shall be construed to alter the rights of the parties to voluntarily enter into validly executed agreements or stipulations which deviate from the basic child support obligation provided such agreements or stipulations comply with the provisions of this paragraph. The court shall, however, retain discretion with respect to child support pursuant to this section.

(5) Any court order or judgment incorporating a validly executed agreement or stipulation which deviates from the basic child support obligation shall set forth the court's reasons for such deviation.

(6) An agreement, stipulation or court order which fails to comply with any of the provisions of this paragraph shall be deemed void as of the date that any of the parties raises the failure to comply in a pleading or motion or a court of competent jurisdiction makes a finding of the failure to comply, whichever is earlier.

(7) If a court of competent jurisdiction finds that an agreement, stipulation or court order fails to comply with any of the provisions of this paragraph, the court shall hold a hearing and determine the child support obligations of the parties pursuant to this section de novo from the date that any of the parties raises the failure to comply in a pleading or motion or a court of competent jurisdiction makes a finding of the failure to comply, whichever is earlier. For the purposes of this section, a court of competent jurisdiction shall be either the family court or the supreme court, notwithstanding the court in which the agreement, stipulation or order was initiated, unless the supreme court has retained exclusive jurisdiction to enforce or modify the agreement, stipulation or order.

(8) The provisions of this paragraph shall not constitute a defense to non-payment of a child support obligation for any period prior to the date that any of the parties raises the failure to comply in a pleading or motion or a court of competent jurisdiction makes a finding of the failure to comply, whichever is earlier.

(i) Where either or both parties are unrepresented, the court shall not enter an order or judgment other than a temporary order pursuant to section two hundred thirty-seven of this article, that

includes a provision for child support unless the unrepresented party or parties have received a copy of the child support standards chart promulgated by the commissioner of [social services] the office of temporary and disability assistance pursuant to subdivision two of section one hundred eleven-i of the social services law. Where either party is in receipt of child support enforcement services through the local social services district, the local social services district child support enforcement unit shall advise such party of the amount derived from application of the child support percentage and that such amount serves as a starting point for the determination of the child support award, and shall provide such party with a copy of the child support standards chart. [In no instance shall the court approve any voluntary support agreement or compromise that includes an amount for child support less than twenty-five dollars per month.]

§2. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 1 of section 413 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subparagraph 8, and paragraphs (d), (g), (h) and (i) of such subdivision, paragraphs (d) and (i) as added by chapter 567 of the laws of 1989 and paragraphs (g) and (h) as amended by chapter 41 of the laws of 1992, are amended to read as follows:

(8) In addition to the basic child support obligation ordered under this subdivision, the court may, in its discretion, order the non-custodial parent to pay an amount to establish a security account designated for the benefit of the child, including, but not limited to, a trust account or annuity to meet the child's future needs. The court may direct the establishment of an account under such terms and conditions as it deems appropriate. The court shall set forth, as applicable: the specific purposes of the account; the person or entity that will act as trustee, custodian or administrator of the funds in the account; the person or entity that will act as the trustee, custodian or administrator of the funds in the account in the event of the death of the designated trustee, custodian or administrator; the disposition of the funds after the emancipation or death of the child or children named as beneficiaries; the particular structure that will fulfill the purposes of the account; and any further provisions necessary to accomplish the purpose of the account. The establishment of such an account shall not diminish any current child support obligations.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (c) of this subdivision[, where]:

(i) If the non-custodial parent's income is above the self-support reserve, but the annual amount of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income below the self-support reserve, but above the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as

reported by the federal department of health and human services, the basic child support obligation shall be [twenty-five] fifty dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self- support reserve, whichever is greater[. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (c) of this subdivision, where the annual amount of the basic child support obligation would reduce the non-custodial parent's income], in addition to any amounts that the court may, in its discretion, order in accordance with subparagraphs four, five six and/or seven of paragraph (c) of this subdivision.

(ii) If the non-custodial parent's annual income is at or below the self-support reserve, but [not below] above the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, the basic child support obligation shall be fifty dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly self-support reserve, whichever is greater, unless such an obligation would reduce the non-custodial parents income below the poverty guidelines amount for a single person. In the latter case, the basic child support obligation shall be twenty-five dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly poverty guidelines amount for a single person, whichever is greater, provided, however, that if the court finds that such basic child support obligation is unjust or inappropriate, which finding shall be based upon consideration of the factors set forth in paragraph (f) of this subdivision, the court shall order the non-custodial parent to pay such amount of the child support as the court finds just and appropriate.

(iii) If the non-custodial parent's annual income is at or below the poverty guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, the basic child support obligation shall be twenty-five dollars per month or the difference between the non-custodial parent's monthly income and the monthly poverty guidelines amount for a single person, whichever is greater, provided, however, that if the court finds that such basic child support obligation is unjust or inappropriate, which finding shall be based upon consideration of the factors set forth in paragraph (f) of this subdivision, the court shall order the non-custodial parent to pay such amount of the child support as the court finds just and appropriate.

(g) Where the court finds that the non-custodial parent's pro rata share of the basic child support obligation is unjust or inappropriate, the court shall order the non-custodial parent to pay such amount of child support as the court finds just and appropriate, and the court shall set forth, in a

written order: the factors it considered; the amount of each party's pro rata share of the basic child support obligation; and the reasons that the court did not order the basic child support obligation. Such written order may not be waived by either party or counsel; provided, however, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, including, but not limited to, section four hundred fifteen of this act, the court shall not find that the non-custodial parent's pro rata share of such obligation is unjust or inappropriate on the basis that such share exceeds the portion of a public assistance grant which is attributable to a child or children. [In no instance shall the court order child support below twenty-five dollars per month.] Where the non-custodial parent's income is less than or equal to the poverty income guidelines amount for a single person as reported by the federal department of health and human services, unpaid child support arrears in excess of five hundred dollars shall not accrue.

(h) (1) A validly executed agreement or stipulation voluntarily entered into between the parties after the effective date of this subdivision presented to the court for incorporation in an order or judgment shall include the following:

(i) a provision stating that the parties have been advised of the provisions of this subdivision, and

(ii) a provision stating that the basic child support obligation provided for therein would presumptively result in the correct amount of child support to be awarded.

(2) In the event that such agreement or stipulation deviates from the basic child support obligation, the agreement or stipulation must specify the amount that such basic child support obligation would have been and the reason or reasons that such agreement or stipulation does not provide for payment of that amount.

(i) Where either or both parties are unrepresented, the court shall not enter an order or judgment other than a temporary order pursuant to section two hundred thirty-seven of [this article] the domestic relations law, that includes a provision for child support unless the unrepresented party or parties have received a copy of the child support standards chart promulgated by the commissioner of [social services] the office of temporary and disability assistance pursuant to subdivision two of section one hundred eleven-i of the social services law. Where either party is in receipt of child support enforcement services through the local social services district, the local social services district child support enforcement unit shall advise such party of the amount derived from application of the child support percentage and that such amount serves as a starting point for the determination of the

child support award, and shall provide such party with a copy of the child support standards chart. [In no instance shall the court approve any voluntary support agreement or compromise that includes an amount for child support less than twenty-five dollars per month.]

(3) Such provision may not be waived by either party or counsel.

(4) Nothing contained in this subdivision shall be construed to alter the rights of the parties to voluntarily enter into validly executed agreements or stipulations which deviate from the basic child support obligation provided such agreements or stipulations comply with the provisions of this paragraph. The court shall, however, retain discretion with respect to child support pursuant to this section.

(5) Any court order or judgment incorporating a validly executed agreement or stipulation which deviates from the basic child support obligation shall set forth the court's reasons for such deviation.

(6) An agreement, stipulation or court order which a court finds fails to comply with any of the provisions of this paragraph shall be deemed void as of the date that any of the parties raises the failure to comply in a pleading or motion or a court of competent jurisdiction makes a finding of the failure to comply, whichever is earlier.

(7) If a court of competent jurisdiction finds that an agreement, stipulation or court order fails to comply with any of the provisions of this paragraph, the court shall hold a hearing and determine the child support obligations of the parties pursuant to this section de novo from the date that any of the parties raises the failure to comply in a pleading or motion or a court of competent jurisdiction makes a finding of the failure to comply, whichever is earlier. For the purposes of this section, a court of competent jurisdiction shall be either the family court or the supreme court, notwithstanding the court in which the agreement, stipulation or order was initiated, unless the supreme court has retained exclusive jurisdiction to enforce or modify the agreement, stipulation or order.

(8) The provisions of this paragraph shall not constitute a defense to non-payment of a child support obligation prior to the date that any of the parties raises the failure to comply in a pleading or motion or a court of competent jurisdiction makes a finding of the failure to comply, whichever is earlier.

§3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

12. Diversion, orders of protection and warrants in persons in need of supervision proceedings and family offenses committed by juveniles (F.C.A. §§735, 742, 812(1))

The landmark reform of the Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) statute, enacted as part of the 2005 New York State budget, added statewide uniformity to the provisions regarding diversion of cases from the Family Court and furthered the salutary legislative goals of reducing unnecessary PINS prosecutions and placements and of ensuring that families in crisis would receive appropriate services. *See* Laws of 2005, ch. 57, Part E. However, the new statute is overly restrictive by permitting the Family Court to refer youth and families for diversion services only upon the youth's initial appearance, although diversion may also be effective at a later point and, indeed, the appropriateness of diversion services may only become clear at a later point. Further, the statute eliminates the ability of parents to obtain necessary emergency relief in the infrequent, but alarming, cases in which their children pose an imminent risk to themselves, their parents or their families. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, therefore, is proposing a measure that would permit diversion referrals at any time. It would further carve out two narrowly-defined exceptions to the pre-petition diversion requirements, thus restoring essential emergency remedies that existed in the PINS statute prior to the 2005 reform.

First, the proposal would amend Family Court Act §742 to permit the Court to order the designated diversion agency to provide diversion services at any time during the pendency of a PINS proceeding, not simply upon the accused juvenile's first appearance. In some cases, the youth and family may become amenable to diversion services at a later point; in others, diversion services may not have been appropriate or available at the outset, but may subsequently be identified as needed and as appropriate. Family mediation and respite care are prominent examples of diversion services that should be afforded at any point that they may be appropriate.

Second, the proposal would permit a potential PINS petitioner to file a PINS petition and to request a warrant for a child who has absconded and cannot be located. In such a circumstance, the child is not able to appear at the diversion conference and the designated diversion agency is, therefore, not able to provide the required documentation of its diligent efforts to prevent the filing of a petition through the convening of the conference. *See* Matter of James S. v. Jessica B., 9 Misc.3d 229 (Fam. Ct., Suff. Co., 2005). This warrant exception would provide an avenue of relief for parents in critical emergency situations in which a child has run away and may be living on the street under dangerous circumstances. Significantly, it would not apply to cases in which children abscond to the home of another parent or identifiable friend or relative, may easily be located and may still be available to participate in diversion conferences. Reflecting the prevalent practice in Family Courts statewide prior to the 2005 legislation, once a child has been apprehended on the warrant and appears in Family Court, the Court would then refer the family to the diversion agency, pursuant to Family Court Act §742(b), unless the Court determines that there is a substantial likelihood that the child would again abscond or that such a referral would be contrary to the child's best interests. If the diversion agency is successful in resolving the family problem through provision of services, the designated diversion agency would so notify the Court, which would then dismiss the petition.

Third, the proposal would permit a potential PINS petitioner to file a PINS petition in order to

request an order of protection in the rare, but serious, circumstance in which a child poses an imminent risk to the petitioner and/or a member of his or her household. Again, this would provide emergency relief in cases in which the need for protection is immediate, *i.e.*, cases in which the requirement for the diversion agency to convene a conference with the child and potential petitioner would impede efforts to prevent injury. Once the emergency has abated and the child and petitioner are before the Court, the Court would then refer the parties to the diversion agency, pursuant to Family Court Act §742(b), unless the Court determines that the child continues to pose an imminent risk to the petitioner or a member or that it would be contrary to the child's best interests. Again, if diversion efforts are successful, the designated diversion agency would so notify the Court, which would then dismiss the petition. Affording the petitioner the remedy of obtaining an order of protection is absolutely essential not only to prevent harm, but also to stem an increasingly disturbing trend that has become evident in Family Courts statewide. In the absence of a means of obtaining an immediate order of protection in cases of child-against-parent violence or threats of violence, all too often parents file family offense petitions, pursuant to Article 8 of the Family Court Act, as a means of evading the diversion requirements of the PINS statute. Article 8, however, affords none of the specialized services or due process protections guaranteed to juveniles under the PINS law. If meaningful relief were available under the PINS statute, the salutary purposes of the PINS law would be preserved while necessary protection would be provided.

Enactment of this proposal would strengthen the PINS statute by restoring much-needed remedies for emergency situations that existed prior to the 2005 enactment. At the same time, it would encourage diversion by permitting the Family Courts to make referrals at any time and, in cases where petitions had been filed without prior diversion attempts, it would establish a rebuttable presumption in favor of post-petition referral for diversion services. By filling these gaps in the available relief with the narrowly-constructed exceptions contained in the Committee's proposal, the Legislature would ensure that the PINS statute would provide broader avenues of relief to resolve family problems.

As part of the 2005 New York State budget, the Legislature enacted landmark legislation significantly expanding the requirements for services to be provided to children and families as a means of preventing unnecessary prosecutions and costly out-of-home placements of Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS). *See* Laws of 2005, ch. 57. Unfortunately, all too often, prosecutions of juveniles by their parents under the family offense provisions of Criminal Procedure Law §530.11 et seq., and Article 8 of the Family Court Act have become a rapidly escalating means of evading the clear requirements and protections for youth, as well as the family services available, under the 2005 PINS legislation. *See People v. Simmey R.*, 12 Misc.3d 1189(A), 824 N.Y.S.2d 765, 2006 WL 2135579, 2006 N.Y.Slip Op. 51500 (Unreported opinion) (Crim. Ct., Kings Co., July 5, 2006). The increase in the PINS age ceiling to 18, thus expanding the jurisdiction of the Family Court to address family dysfunction involving older adolescents, was not accompanied by any change in the statutes according the Family Court exclusive jurisdiction over family offenses involving juveniles not criminally responsible by reason of age, generally juveniles under the age of 16 or, in the case of juvenile offenses prosecuted in criminal courts, 13, 14 or 15. *See* Crim. Proc. Law §530.11(1); Penal Law §§10.00(18), 30; Fam. Ct. Act §812(1).

The Committee is proposing legislation, therefore, to close that loophole by specifying that family offenses committed by juveniles under the age of 18 against their parents or guardians should be

dealt with as Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) proceedings in accordance with Article 7 of the Family Court Act, rather than as family offense proceedings pursuant to the Criminal Procedure Law or Article 8 of the Family Court Act. The extension of PINS jurisdiction to juveniles up to the age of 18 and the delineation of diversion requirements that must be followed in such cases collectively reflect the clear legislative intent that intra-familial problems arising between parents and children in such cases should be addressed through utilization of the comprehensive statutory framework of Article 7.

Article 8 of the Family Court Act is an inappropriate vehicle for proceeding against juveniles as it lacks important statutory protections, some constitutionally required and some required by Federal law, applicable to juveniles, including, inter alia, the right to an attorney, proof beyond a reasonable doubt, consideration for adjustment or diversion, detention and placement in juvenile facilities separate and apart from adults, and orders of disposition appropriate to their needs and best interests. *See, e.g.*, Family Court Act §§249, 304.1, 308.1, 342.2, 352.2, 720, 734, 735, 754. The rights to legal representation and to proof beyond a reasonable doubt have been held to be of constitutional magnitude and, under New York law, are equally applicable in juvenile delinquency and PINS proceedings. *See In re Gault*, 387 U.S. 1 (1967); *In re Winship*, 397 U.S. 358 (1970); *In re Iris R.*, 33 N.Y.2d 987 (1974). Unlike attorney representation in Article 8 proceedings pursuant to section 262 of the Family Court Act, legal representation in juvenile delinquency and PINS cases is presumptively non-waivable. *See* Family Court Act §249-a.

The remedies of exclusion and incarceration available for family offense proceedings under both the Criminal Procedure Law and Article 8 are wholly inappropriate when applied in the context of dependent children prosecuted by their parents or guardians. *See People v. Simmey R.*, supra; *Paula S. v. Steven S.*, 154 Misc.2d 567 (Fam. Ct., Ulster Co., 1992). In *Paula S.*, the Family Court, Ulster County, substituted a PINS petition for a family offense petition on the ground that PINS proceedings offer more appropriate dispositional alternatives, including placement in treatment, rather than jail, facilities. Parents have a responsibility to support their children until the age of 21 and may be charged with abusing or neglecting them until the children reach the age of 18. *See* Family Court Act §§413(1), 1012; Social Services Law §101. Unmarried minors may not obtain public assistance independent of their parents until they reach the age of 18. *See* Social Services Law §131(6). Thus, orders of protection excluding respondents from their homes, a common remedy in family offense cases, should not be permitted in cases involving juveniles under the age of 18, as this remedy would relegate children to the streets with no means of support. Further, incarceration in jail for violations of orders of protection, authorized under Article 8 for up to six months per violation, contravenes Federal law when applied to juvenile respondents. The proscription against confinement of juveniles in adult jails, lock-ups and prisons, contained in New York law [Family Court Act §§ 304.1(2), 720(1)], is required as a condition of State funding under the Federal *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974*, 42 U.S.C. §5633(a)(13). No authority exists under Article 8 or under the Executive Law to detain or place children charged with family offenses in juvenile facilities.

The PINS statute provides full protection for victims of family offenses committed by juveniles against parents and guardians, while, at the same time, furthering the special needs of juveniles and retaining the constitutional and statutory protections applicable to them. PINS cases may be initiated by petitions filed, inter alia, by peace or police officers, parents or legal guardians or “any person who has suffered injury as a result of the alleged activity of a person alleged to be in need of supervision, or

a witness to such activity.” See Family Court Act §733. Article 7 authorizes issuance of orders of protection and temporary orders of protection, permits detention in juvenile non-secure detention and foster care facilities in appropriate cases, permits orders of restitution, and provides for dispositions in juvenile programs tailored specifically to the juveniles’ needs and their presenting problems. See Family Court Act §§ 720, 740, 754, 758-a, 759. Since Article 7 contains each of these remedies, the Family Court Act should be amended to prohibit a juvenile to be adjudicated both for a family offense and as a PINS. The dual adjudications of 15-year old Latoya D. under both Articles 7 and 8 of the Family Court Act should have been deemed both inappropriate and unnecessary. See Marsha C. v. Latoya D., 224 A.D.2d 522, 638 N.Y.S.2d 129 (2d Dept., 1996), *leave to app. denied*, 88 N.Y.2d 804 (1996), and Matter of Latoya D., 224 A.D.2d 524, 638 N.Y.S.2d 128 (2d Dept., 1996), *leave to app. denied*, 88 N.Y.2d 804 (1996).

By requiring that juveniles who commit family offenses against their parents or guardians be dealt with pursuant to Article 7, rather than Article 8, of the Family Court Act., the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee proposal will assure that family offenses committed by such juveniles are addressed appropriately and in accordance with both State and Federal law.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to warrants and orders of protection in persons in need of supervision cases and family offenses committed by juveniles

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision (g) of section 735 of the family court act, as added by chapter 57 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(g) (i) The designated lead agency shall promptly give written notice to the potential petitioner whenever attempts to prevent the filing of a petition have terminated, and shall indicate in such notice whether efforts were successful. The notice shall also detail the diligent attempts made to divert the case if a determination has been made that there is no substantial likelihood that the youth will benefit from further attempts. No persons in need of supervision petition may be filed pursuant to this article during the period the designated lead agency is providing diversion services. A finding by the designated lead agency that the case has been successfully diverted shall constitute presumptive evidence that the underlying allegations have been successfully resolved in any petition based upon the same factual allegations. No petition may be filed pursuant to this article by the parent or other person legally responsible for the youth where diversion services have been terminated because of the failure of the parent or other person legally responsible for the youth to consent to or actively participate.

(ii) [The] Except as provided in paragraph (iii) of this subdivision, the clerk of the court shall accept a petition for filing only if it has attached thereto the following notices:

(A) if the potential petitioner is the parent or other person legally responsible for the youth, a notice from the designated lead agency indicating there is no bar to the filing of the petition as the potential petitioner consented to and actively participated in diversion services; and

(B) a notice from the designated lead agency stating that it has terminated diversion services because it has determined that there is no substantial likelihood that the youth and his or her family will benefit from further attempts, and that the case has not been successfully diverted.

(iii) The clerk of the court shall accept a petition for filing if:

(A) the potential petitioner is requesting that the court issue a warrant pursuant to section seven hundred thirty-eight of this article, because the respondent has absconded from the home and is unable to be located; or

(B) the potential petitioner is requesting that the court issue a temporary order of protection or order of protection, pursuant to section seven hundred forty or seven hundred fifty-nine of this article, because the respondent poses an imminent risk of harm to the potential petitioner or member of his or her household.

§2. Subdivision (b) of section 742 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 57 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(b) At the initial appearance of the respondent, the court shall review any termination of diversion services pursuant to such section, and the documentation of diligent attempts to provide appropriate services and determine whether such efforts or services provided are sufficient [and] . The court may, at any time, subject to the provisions of section seven hundred forty-eight of this article, order that additional diversion attempts be undertaken by the designated lead agency. The court may order the youth and the parent or other person legally responsible for the youth to participate in diversion services. At the initial appearance of the respondent on a petition filed in accordance with subparagraph (A) of paragraph (iii) of subdivision (g) of section seven hundred thirty-five of this article, the court shall refer the respondent and parent to the designated lead agency for diversion attempts, unless the court determines that there is a substantial likelihood that the child would abscond or that it would be contrary to the child's best interests for such efforts to be undertaken. At the initial appearance of the respondent on a petition filed in accordance with

subparagraph (B) of paragraph (iii) of subdivision (g) of section seven hundred thirty-five of this article, the court shall refer the respondent and parent to the designated lead agency for diversion attempts, unless the court determines that the child continues to pose an imminent risk to the petitioner or a member of his or her household or that it would be contrary to the child's best interests for such efforts to be undertaken. If the designated lead agency thereafter determines that [the] a case referred for diversion efforts under this section has been successfully resolved, it shall so notify the court, and the court shall dismiss the petition.

§3. The opening paragraph of subdivision 1 of section 812 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 476 of the laws of 2009, is amended to read as follows:

The family court and the criminal courts shall have concurrent jurisdiction over any proceeding concerning acts which would constitute disorderly conduct, harassment in the first degree, harassment in the second degree, aggravated harassment in the second degree, sexual misconduct, forcible touching, sexual abuse in the third degree, sexual abuse in the second degree as set forth in subdivision one of section 130.60 of the penal law, stalking in the first degree, stalking in the second degree, stalking in the third degree, stalking in the fourth degree, criminal mischief, menacing in the second degree, menacing in the third degree, reckless endangerment, assault in the second degree, assault in the third degree or an attempted assault between spouses or former spouses, or between parent and child or between members of the same family or household except that if the respondent would not be criminally responsible by reason of age pursuant to section 30.00 of the penal law, then the family court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over such proceeding. Family offenses alleged to have been committed by a child under the age of eighteen against a parent or guardian shall be addressed in accordance with article seven, rather than this article, of this act.

Notwithstanding a complainant's election to proceed in family court, the criminal court shall not be divested of jurisdiction to hear a family offense proceeding pursuant to this section. For purposes of this article, "disorderly conduct" includes disorderly conduct not in a public place. For purposes of this article, "members of the same family or household" shall mean the following:

§4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law and shall apply to petitions filed on or after such effective date.

13. Probation access to the statewide automated order of protection and warrant registry and penalties for unauthorized access to the registry
(Exec. L. §221-a; F.C.A. §835; CPL §§390.20, 390.30)

In enacting the *Family Protection and Domestic Violence Intervention Act of 1994* [Laws of 1994, ch. 222, 224], the New York State Legislature demonstrated its intent to assure a more rigorous response by law enforcement agencies and the courts to domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence are afforded easy access to either or both Family and criminal courts for prosecution of family offense cases. In addition, offenders are subject to mandatory arrest and face heightened consequences for abusive acts in both courts. Local probation departments serving both family and criminal courts, therefore, require sufficient information regarding both the offense and the offender in order to assist the courts in responding effectively to these legislative changes.

One of the most important features of the statute was its establishment of an automated statewide registry of orders of protection and warrants. The registry, which commenced operations on October 1, 1995, ensures that courts and law enforcement officials have available a system that will provide timely and accurate information relating to pending and prior orders of protection and warrants. It currently comprises an enormous and rapidly growing database; according to the Office of Court Administration, well over two million orders of protection have been entered onto the registry since its inception in 1995. However, two significant gaps undermine the statutory framework governing the registry: first, that probation departments are not authorized to utilize the registry in conducting investigations, and, second, that the registry lacks critical safeguards to prevent unauthorized access to the sensitive information contained in its database.

The Committee is proposing legislation expressly authorizing local probation departments to obtain access to necessary information on the statewide registry and imposing penalties for unauthorized access. Information regarding an individual's history of such orders may be essential, not only for the resolution of family offense cases, but also for custody, visitation, juvenile delinquency, persons in need of supervision (PINS) and criminal proceedings. Significantly, the proposal authorizes the courts to call upon local probation departments to perform investigations that will assist the courts in their disposition of family offense matters, and enables probation departments to obtain access to domestic violence registry information for these and other pre-dispositional investigations.

The family offense article of the Family Court Act implies, but does not explicitly authorize, involvement by probation departments in gathering information in aid of the Family Court's dispositions. While dispositional hearings "may commence immediately" upon completion of a fact-finding hearing, the article provides that the dispositional hearing may be adjourned by the Court "to enable it to make inquiry into the surroundings, conditions, and capacities of the persons involved in the proceedings." Family Court Act §§835(a), 836(b). Although not delegating the duty to make that inquiry to probation, subdivision (b) of section 835 of the Family Court Act provides that "[r]eports prepared by the probation service for use by the court at any time prior to the making of an order of disposition shall be deemed confidential information," which may "not be furnished to the court prior to the completion of a fact-finding hearing, but may be used in a dispositional hearing."

The Committee's proposal resolves this ambiguity by making explicit the Family Court's discretion to order local probation departments to prepare investigations and reports for use in dispositional proceedings in family offense matters. While not limiting the scope of the information that can be requested in such an investigation, the proposal enumerates four areas of inquiry. First, the proposal permits inquiry into "the presence or absence of aggravating circumstances," since the Court may order up to a three-year, rather than a one-year, order of protection where such circumstances, as defined in section 827(a)(vii) of the Family Court Act, have been found. Second, it permits investigation of "the extent of injuries or out-of-pocket losses to the victim which may form the basis for an order of restitution," a dispositional order authorized pursuant to subdivision (e) of section 841 of the Family Court Act. Third, in order to prevent issuance of inconsistent orders and provide insight as to the respondent's record of compliance, the proposal permits inquiry into "the history of the respondent with respect to family offenses and orders of protection in this or other courts." Significantly, if the completion of the fact-finding stage coincides with the first appearance of both parties before the Family Court, this investigation may assist the Court in fulfilling its duty, pursuant to subdivision six of section 821-a of the Family Court Act, to "inquire as to the existence of any other orders of protection between the parties." Fourth, the proposal permits inquiry into whether the respondent is licensed to possess and is in fact in possession of firearms, an inquiry that will aid the Court in setting conditions for orders of protection and, in cases of serious violation, will facilitate enforcement of the laws authorizing and, under certain circumstances, requiring suspension or revocation of firearms licenses and surrender of firearms. *See* Family Court Act §§842-a, 846-a; Laws of 1996, ch. 644.

Additionally, the proposed legislation allows criminal courts to obtain assistance from local probation departments to conduct pre-sentence investigations where relevant to the issuance of an order of protection, including instances in which such investigations are not required under the Criminal Procedure Law. Some family offenses currently require pre-sentence investigations, while others do not. Section 390.20 of the Criminal Procedure Law requires pre-sentence investigations in felony cases and in misdemeanor cases where a sentence of incarceration in excess of 90 days has been imposed, where consecutive incarcerative sentences aggregating in excess of 90 days have been imposed or, unless waived by the parties and the court, where a sentence of probation has been imposed. In all other cases, pre-sentence investigations are purely discretionary as an aid to the court in sentencing. While not altering the courts' discretion with respect to ordering pre-sentence investigations in non-mandated cases, this proposal explicitly adds an authorization for the courts to order such inquiries for the purpose of "issuance of an order of protection" pursuant to section 530.12 of the Criminal Procedure Law.

Where the family offense conviction is not for a felony, which requires a full-scale pre-sentence investigation, the proposal treats family offense convictions, whether for misdemeanors or violations, as misdemeanors eligible for "abbreviated investigations and short form reports," in accordance with section 390.30(4) of the Criminal Procedure Law. While not providing an exhaustive list of permissible areas of inquiry, the proposal enumerates the factors which the court must consider in determining whether an order of protection should issue, pursuant to subdivision (a) of section 530.12 of the Criminal Procedure Law -- specifically, the offender's access to weapons, abuse of controlled substances or alcohol and the offender's history of injury or threat of injury to family members. As in Family Court proceedings, the inclusion of inquiries regarding firearms will enhance

the court's ability to frame appropriate conditions for orders of protection and, in cases involving serious violations, will afford the courts information necessary to enforce the provisions regarding firearms license suspension or revocation and firearms surrender. *See* Criminal Procedure Law §§530.12, 530.14; Laws of 1996, ch. 644; Laws of 1993, ch. 498.

Finally, recognizing the importance of security to the operation of computer systems, the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee recommends the enactment of civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized disclosure of information from the statewide automated registry of orders of protection and warrants. Enactment of penalties is compelled by the requirement, contained in the Federal *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* [Public Law 104-193, §303], for all states to have safeguards in place by October 1, 1997 against unauthorized disclosure of information with respect to paternity establishment or child support, or with respect to the whereabouts of a party for whom a protective order has been issued or as to whom the State has reason to believe physical or emotional harm might result from such disclosure. It is also consistent with the confidentiality requirements of the 2005 amendments to the Federal *Violence Against Women Act* [Public Law 109-162; 18 U.S.C. §2265(d) and Subtitle K, §41102], which, *inter alia*, restrict use of registry information to “protection order enforcement purposes.”

Much of the information to be contained in the registry is derived from records that would otherwise be shielded from such disclosure. Various forms of confidential, identifying information regarding the parties must be included, particularly where, for example, in matrimonial and Family Court cases, fingerprint identification is not available. The system includes court action information, an indication of the date process was served, the date of expiration of the order and the terms and conditions of the order, and requires that all statutes governing confidentiality of court records apply equally to information on the registry. *See* Executive Law §221-a. Subdivision one of section 235 of the Domestic Relations Law provides that matrimonial records must be kept confidential for 100 years and may not be disclosed to non-parties or their attorneys without a court order. Section 166 of the Family Court Act protects Family Court records against "indiscriminate public inspection."⁴⁹ However, while requiring these provisions to be followed with respect to information on the registry, the Legislature provided no sanction against unauthorized disclosure.

Adequate security is a crucial component of any computer system, but it is especially important in a system, such as the registry, that contains highly sensitive information, much of it bearing statutory confidentiality protections. Misuse of the information in the registry may not only place intimate information inappropriately before the public eye, but it also may place domestic violence victims and their children in serious jeopardy if data is released to individuals who pose a threat to them. Security protections are also essential in light of the large number of authorized individuals with legitimate access to the system -- law enforcement officials statewide, court officials and others -- who must take seriously their mandate to preserve the confidentiality of the information.

The Committee’s proposal would amend section 221-a of the Executive Law to create

⁴⁹ Section 205.5 of the *Uniform Rules for the Family Court* gives definition to this statute by enumerating parties, their attorneys, agencies with which children are placed, and, by amendment in 1994, prosecutors insofar as necessary for a pending criminal investigation, as those who are authorized to have access to Family Court records without first obtaining a court order.

criminal and civil penalties for unauthorized disclosure of data from the registry.⁵⁰ Under the revised proposal, knowing and willful disclosure of information to individuals not authorized to receive it would subject violators to prosecution for a class A misdemeanor, the same criminal penalty that applies to the unauthorized willful disclosure of statewide child abuse registry and confidential HIV-related information. *See* Social Services Law §422(12); Public Health Law §2783(2). Such violators may be subject to a civil fine of up to \$5,000, as would persons who, through gross negligence, release or permit the release of information from the registry to individuals not authorized to receive it.

Enactment of this proposal will significantly enhance the ability of courts, both civil and criminal, to make informed decisions in cases involving domestic violence and will, at the same time, enhance the protection of victims of that violence by protecting the integrity of the statewide order of protection database.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, the criminal procedure law and the executive law, in relation to the statewide automated registry of orders of protection and pre-dispositional and pre-sentence investigations in criminal and family courts

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivisions 4 and 5 of section 221-a of the executive law, subdivision 4 as amended by section 7 of part D of chapter 56 of the laws of 2008 and subdivision 5 as amended by chapter 107 of the laws of 2004, are amended and such section is amended by adding a new subdivision 7 to read as follows:

4. Courts and law enforcement officials, including probation officers, shall have the ability to disclose and share information with respect to such orders and warrants consistent with the purposes of this section, subject to applicable provisions of the family court act, domestic relations law and the criminal procedure law concerning the confidentiality, sealing and expungement of records. Designated representatives of a local probation department shall have access to information in the statewide registry of orders of protection and warrants necessary in order to respond to a judicial request for information pursuant to subdivision six of section eight hundred twenty-one-a of the family court act or subdivision six-a of section 530.12 of the criminal procedure law, or to

⁵⁰ This proposal was revised in 1996 to address the concerns raised by the Governor with respect to similar legislation that was vetoed in 1995 [S 3940, Veto Message #21]. However, the Committee's original 1995 version was again passed by the Legislature and vetoed by the Governor in 1996 [A 9809, Veto Message #11]. No action has been taken on this matter by the Legislature since 1996, notwithstanding the new Federal statutory mandates.

prepare an investigation and report in proceedings conducted pursuant to sections 351.1, six hundred forty-two, six hundred fifty-six, six hundred sixty-two, seven hundred fifty, eight hundred thirty-five and subdivision (b) of section one thousand forty-seven of the family court act or article three hundred ninety of the criminal procedure law.

5. [In] Except as provided in subdivision seven of this section, in no case shall the state or any state or local law enforcement official or court official be held liable for any violations of rules and regulations promulgated under this section, or for damages for any delay or failure to file an order of protection or special order of conditions, or to transmit information to the law enforcement communication network pertaining to such orders or related family court arrest warrants, or for acting in reliance upon such information. For purposes of this subdivision law enforcement official shall include but not be limited to an employee of a sheriff's office, or a municipal police department or a peace officer acting pursuant to his or her special duties.

7. Any person who knowingly and willfully releases or permits the release of any data or information contained in the statewide registry to persons or agencies not authorized by law or regulations to receive it shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Any person who knowingly and willfully or through gross negligence releases or permits the release of any data or information contained in the statewide registry to persons or agencies not authorized by law or regulations to receive it shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to five thousand dollars.

§2. The section heading and subdivision (a) of section 835 of the family court act, such subdivision as amended by chapter 529 of the laws of 1963, are amended to read as follows:

Sequence of hearings; probation investigations and reports. (a) Upon completion of the fact-finding hearing, the dispositional hearing may commence immediately after the required findings are made. In aid of its disposition, the court may adjourn the proceeding for an investigation and report by a local probation department. For the purposes of this article, the probation investigation and report may include, but is not limited to: the presence or absence of aggravating factors as defined in paragraph (vii) of subdivision (a) of section eight hundred twenty-seven of this article, the extent of injuries or out- of-pocket losses to the victim which may form the basis for an order of restitution pursuant to subdivision (e) of section eight hundred forty-one of this article, the history of the respondent with respect to family offenses and orders of protection in this or other courts, whether the respondent is in possession of any firearms and, if so, whether the respondent is licensed or

otherwise authorized to be in possession of such firearms.

§3. Subdivision 3 of section 390.20 of the criminal procedure law is amended to read as follows:

3. Permissible in any case. For the purposes of sentence or issuance of an order of protection pursuant to subdivision five of section 530.12 of this chapter, the court may, in its discretion, order a pre-sentence investigation and report in any case, irrespective of whether such investigation and report is required by subdivision one or two.

§4. Subdivision 4 of section 390.30 of the criminal procedure law, as amended by chapter 618 of the laws of 1992, is amended to read as follows:

4. Abbreviated investigation and short form report. In lieu of the procedure set forth in subdivisions one, two and three, where the conviction is of a misdemeanor or family offense, as defined in subdivision one of section 530.11 of this law, other than a felony, the scope of the pre-sentence investigation may be abbreviated and a short form report may be made. The use of abbreviated investigations and short form reports, the matters to be covered therein and the form of the reports shall be in accordance with the general rules regulating methods and procedures in the administration of probation as adopted from time to time by the state director of probation and correctional alternatives pursuant to the provisions of article twelve of the executive law. No such rule, however, shall be construed so as to relieve the agency conducting the investigation of the duty of investigating and reporting upon:

(a) the extent of the injury or economic loss and the actual out-of-pocket loss to the victim, including the amount of restitution and reparation sought by the victim, after the victim has been informed of the right to seek restitution and reparation, or

(b) in a case involving a family offense, as defined in subdivision one of section 530.11 of this chapter, the defendant's history of family offenses and orders of protection, including violations, in proceedings or actions in this or other courts, the extent of injuries or threats of injury to the complainant or members of complainant's family or household, the use or threatened use of dangerous instruments against the complainant or members of complainant's family or household, whether the defendant is in possession of any firearms and, if so, whether defendant is licensed or otherwise authorized to be in possession of such firearms, the extent to which the defendant poses an immediate and ongoing danger to the complainant or members of the complainant's family or

household and any other information relevant to the issue of whether an order of protection, in addition to any other disposition, should be issued in accordance with subdivision five of section 530.12 of this chapter, or

(c) any matter relevant to the question of sentence or issuance of an order of protection that the court directs to be included in particular cases.

§5. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

III. Previously Endorsed Proposals

1. Stays of administrative fair hearings regarding reports of child abuse or maltreatment (F.C.A. §§1039, 1051; S.S.L. §§22(4), 422(8), 424-a(1))

Two parallel systems, one judicial and one administrative, coexist to determine the validity of reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment contained in the statewide central registry. Because these systems operate on different tracks with different time-frames, they sometimes produce disparate results that can be extremely harmful to the children and families involved. Because fair hearings are being held in increasing numbers and with greater dispatch than in the past, the problem of harmful, disparate results has escalated. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing a measure to ensure that, in cases in which parallel Family Court and administrative proceedings are in progress, the administrative fair hearing process would not precipitously advance without awaiting the outcome of the Family Court matter.

Under existing law, a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment that is determined upon investigation to be supported by credible evidence may form the basis for a child protective petition in Family Court pursuant to Article 10 of the Family Court Act. In accordance with the due process protections afforded by the Family Court Act, judges of the Family Court may make findings of child abuse or neglect by a preponderance of the evidence or, in particularly serious cases, may make findings of severe or repeated child abuse by clear and convincing evidence. Once findings are made, cases proceed to disposition, which results in final determinations of whether children are in need of protection. *See* Family Court Act §§1047, 1051, 1052. Alternatively, on consent of the parties, cases may be adjourned in contemplation of dismissal for a period not to exceed one year upon designated terms and conditions which, if complied with, result in dismissal of the proceedings. *See* Family Court Act §§1039, 1039-a.

Existing law permits individuals who are the subjects of reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, to challenge those reports administratively by requesting that the findings be amended, even while Family Court proceedings are pending. In fact, the subjects of reports are required to request such amendments within 90 days of being notified that the child protective agency has found the report to be “indicated,” *i.e.*, supported by credible evidence. The investigating child protective agency must send the relevant records to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) within 20 days of a request by OCFS and OCFS must make its determination regarding the request to amend within 15 days of receiving the records. *See* Social Services Law §422(8). Reports reviewed and determined by OCFS not to meet the credible evidence test must be amended to be “unfounded,” which would preclude their use in court or for any purpose other than limited use by child protective agencies in subsequent investigations. *See* Social Services Law §422(5). If OCFS declines to amend the report within 90 days, or if the report is found upon the agency’s review to be supported by credible evidence, the report may be the subject of a fair hearing at which the agency has the burden of sustaining the report (or, as the case may be, supporting its disclosure as reasonably related to employment) by a preponderance of the evidence. *See* Matter of Lee T.T v. Dowling, 87 N.Y.2d 699 (1996).

In many, if not most, cases, the Family Court proceeding has concluded prior to the resolution

of the administrative review and fair hearing process. Indeed, the Legislature clearly contemplated that the administrative process would be informed by and, in cases in which a judicial adjudication has been made, bound by the results of the judicial proceeding. Section 422(8)(b) of the Social Services Law provides that the fact that the Family Court has made a finding of child abuse or neglect regarding an allegation forming the basis of a report of child abuse or maltreatment creates an “irrebuttable presumption” that credible evidence supports the allegation. A Family Court finding is thus conclusive proof by statute of the fact that a report is “indicated” and, as noted, is dispositive as well of whether an allegation of abuse or neglect against the subject of the report (the “Respondent” in the Family Court proceeding) has been proven by a preponderance of the evidence or, in cases of severe or repeated child abuse, by the higher level of clear and convincing evidence. The conclusive effect of a Family Court finding was recognized by the Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department in the recent case of McReynolds v. City of New York, 18 A.D.3d 316 (1st Dept., 2005), *lve. app. denied*, 5 N.Y.3d 707 (2005), *cert. dismissed sub nom McReynolds v. Office of Children and Family Services*, 546 U.S. 1027 (2005). (Family Court abuse finding supports retention of maltreatment reports on State Central Register).

However, in some cases the Family Court proceeding is still pending when the statutory deadline looms for resolution of the administrative process. Unfortunately, the statute is silent on what impact the pendency of an unresolved Family Court case should have on the administrative process. This has led to anomalous results, including cases in which the administrative review or fair hearing resulted in a determination that the report had been “unfounded,” although the Family Court ultimately determined the case to be fully proven under Article 10 of the Family Court Act. One disturbing example was an adoption case in which the prospective adoptive parent received a clearance from the child abuse registry, even though she had been adjudicated in Family Court for child abuse. In some instances in which the administrative amendment of the report as “unfounded” has occurred prior to the adjudication of the Family Court proceeding, the conversion of the report to “unfounded” has precluded its admissibility in the Family Court proceeding, notwithstanding its clear admissibility pursuant to Family Court Act §1046(a)(v). In other cases, the administrative process has operated entirely without reference to the Family Court process, with administrative law judges unaware that Family Court judges have made adjudications that should, in fact, trigger the irrebuttable presumption that such reports are substantiated (“indicated”).

The Committee is proposing a simple solution to this conundrum that is designed to harmonize the administrative and judicial processes. The proposal would amend sections 22(4), 422(8) and 424-a(1) of the Social Services Law to provide that where a proceeding pursuant to Article 10 of the Family Court Act is pending in Family Court with respect to a child named in a child abuse or maltreatment report, the time periods for amendments and for requesting and resolving fair hearings should not begin to run until the Family Court matter has been concluded. The administrative process must, therefore, await a disposition of the Family Court proceeding or the conclusion of a period of an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal of the Family Court case, whichever occurs later. Further, where a Family Court proceeding is pending, the local child protection agency (the Petitioner in the Family Court matter) must provide the NYS OCFS with copies of pleadings and court orders and must report the status of the action. NYS OCFS would then be required to defer its administrative review and determination until the conclusion of the Family Court case.

These requirements for an automatic stay, transfer of necessary records and status reports will

prevent the administrative and judicial processes from operating at cross-purposes and will avoid inconsistent results. In ensuring that administrative processes will be resolved with the benefit of knowledge of the outcome of the Family Court cases, and in protecting the admissibility of necessary records in Family Court, this proposal will significantly further the goals of justice and accuracy in both the administrative and judicial realms.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the social services law, in relation to administrative fair hearings regarding reports of child abuse or maltreatment in the state central registry

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision (f) of section 1039 of the family court act, as added by chapter 707 of the laws of 1975, is amended to read as follows:

(f) If the proceeding is not so restored to the calendar, the petition is, at the expiration of the adjournment period, deemed to have been dismissed by the court in furtherance of justice unless an application is pending pursuant to subdivision (e) of this section. If such application is granted, the petition shall not be dismissed and shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of such subdivision (e). The petitioner shall notify the office of children and family services, in accordance with sections 422 and 424-a of the social services law, of the outcome of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, including dismissal of the petition upon expiration of the adjournment or, where the proceeding has been restored to the calendar, of any proceedings under this article following such restoration.

§2. Section 1051 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (g) to read as follows:

(g) The petitioner shall notify the office of children and family services, in accordance with sections 422 and 424-a of the social services law, of any findings of abuse or neglect and of any orders of dismissal entered pursuant to this section.

§3. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 4 of section 22 of the social services law, as added by chapter 473 of the laws of 1978, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of subdivision two of section four hundred twenty-four-a of this chapter and in paragraph (b) of this subdivision, any appeal pursuant to this section must be requested within sixty days after the date of the action or failure to act complained

of. However, where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act is pending with respect to a child named in a child abuse or maltreatment report that is the subject of an appeal pursuant to sections four hundred twenty-two or four hundred twenty-four-a of this chapter, the period to request an appeal shall not commence, any pending appeal shall be stayed and the appeal shall not be determined until the disposition of such family court proceeding or until the conclusion of the period of any adjournment of such proceeding in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later.

§4. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subdivision 8 of section 422 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 12 of the laws of 1996, are amended to read as follows:

(a)(i) At any time subsequent to the completion of the investigation but in no event later than ninety days after the subject of the report is notified that the report is indicated the subject may request the commissioner to amend the record of the report. If the commissioner does not amend the report in accordance with such request within ninety days of receiving the request, the subject shall have the right to a fair hearing, held in accordance with paragraph (b) of this subdivision, to determine whether the record of the report in the central register should be amended on the grounds that it is inaccurate or it is being maintained in a manner inconsistent with this title. Where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act is pending with respect to a child named in the child abuse or maltreatment report that is the subject of a request to amend under this section, the ninety-day period to request an amendment of the report and the ninety-day period for the commissioner to amend the report shall not commence and any pending request to amend the report shall be stayed until the disposition of such family court proceeding or until the conclusion of the period of any adjournment of such proceeding in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later.

(ii) Upon receipt of a request to amend the record of a child abuse and maltreatment report the department shall immediately send a written request to the child protective service or the state agency which was responsible for investigating the allegations of abuse or maltreatment for all records, reports and other information maintained by the service or state agency pertaining to such indicated report. The service or state agency shall as expeditiously as possible but within no more than twenty working days of receiving such request, forward all records, reports and other information it maintains on such indicated report to the department, including a copy of any petition and court order or orders with respect to a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act either pending or disposed of regarding such report. Where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of

the family court act is pending regarding a child named in the child abuse or maltreatment report that is the subject of a request to amend under this section, the child protective service or state agency, as applicable, shall report the status of the family court proceeding to the department, which shall defer its review and determination pending the disposition of the proceeding or conclusion of any period of adjournment of the proceeding in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later. Immediately upon the disposition of the proceeding or conclusion of any adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, the child protective service or state agency, as applicable, shall report the disposition of the proceeding or outcome of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, to the department. The department shall as expeditiously as possible but within no more than fifteen working days of receiving such materials from the child protective service or state agency, review all such materials in its possession concerning the indicated report and determine, after affording such service or state agency a reasonable opportunity to present its views, whether there is some credible evidence to find that the subject committed the act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment giving rise to the indicated report and whether, based on guidelines developed by the department pursuant to subdivision five of section four hundred twenty-four-a of this title, such act or acts could be relevant and reasonably related to employment of the subject of the report by a provider agency, as defined by subdivision three of section four hundred twenty-four-a of this title, or relevant and reasonably related to the subject of the report being allowed to have regular and substantial contact with children who are cared for by a provider agency, or relevant and reasonably related to the approval or disapproval of an application submitted by the subject of the report to a licensing agency, as defined by subdivision four of section four hundred twenty-four-a of this title. In determining whether there is credible evidence that the subject committed the act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment giving rise to the indicated report, the fact that there is a family court finding of abuse or neglect against the subject in regard to an allegation contained in the report shall create an irrebuttable presumption that said allegation is substantiated by some credible evidence.

(iii) If it is determined at the review held pursuant to this paragraph (a) that there is no credible evidence in the record to find that the subject committed an act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment, the department shall amend the record to indicate that the report is "unfounded" and notify the subject forthwith.

(iv) If it is determined at the review held pursuant to this paragraph (a) that there is some

credible evidence in the record to find that the subject committed such act or acts but that such act or acts could not be relevant and reasonably related to the employment of the subject by a provider agency or to the subject being allowed to have regular and substantial contact with children who are cared for by a provider agency or the approval or disapproval of an application which could be submitted by the subject to a licensing agency, the department shall be precluded from informing a provider or licensing agency which makes an inquiry to the department pursuant to the provisions of section four hundred twenty-four-a of this title concerning the subject that the person about whom the inquiry is made is the subject of an indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment. The department shall notify forthwith the subject of the report of such determinations and that a fair hearing has been scheduled pursuant to paragraph (b) of this subdivision. The sole issue at such hearing shall be whether the subject has been shown by some credible evidence to have committed the act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment giving rise to the indicated report.

(v) If it is determined at the review held pursuant to this paragraph (a) that there is some credible evidence in the record to prove that the subject committed an act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment and that such act or acts could be relevant and reasonably related to the employment of the subject by a provider agency or to the subject being allowed to have regular and substantial contact with children cared for by a provider agency or the approval or disapproval of an application which could be submitted by the subject to a licensing agency, the department shall notify forthwith the subject of the report of such determinations and that a fair hearing has been scheduled pursuant to paragraph (b) of this subdivision.

(b)(i) If the department, within ninety days of receiving a request from the subject that the record of a report be amended, does not amend the record in accordance with such request, the department shall schedule a fair hearing and shall provide notice of the scheduled hearing date to the subject, the statewide central register and, as appropriate, to the child protective service or the state agency which investigated the report. Where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act is pending with respect to a child named in a child abuse or maltreatment report that is the subject of a request to amend under this section, the period to schedule the fair hearing regarding the failure to amend shall not commence, any pending fair hearing shall be stayed and the fair hearing shall not be determined until the disposition of such family court proceeding or until the conclusion of the period of any adjournment of such proceeding in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later. Where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act is pending, the child

protective service or state agency, as applicable, shall report the status of the family court proceeding to the department. Immediately upon the disposition of the proceeding or conclusion of any adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later, the child protective service or state agency, as applicable, shall report the disposition of the proceeding or outcome of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, to the department.

(ii) The burden of proof in such a hearing shall be on the child protective service or the state agency which investigated the report, as the case may be. In such a hearing, the fact that there is a family court finding of abuse or neglect against the subject in regard to an allegation contained in the report shall create an irrebuttable presumption that said allegation is substantiated by some credible evidence. Where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act is pending with respect to a child named in the child abuse or maltreatment report that is the subject of a fair hearing under this section, the department shall defer its determination until the disposition of such family court proceeding or until the conclusion of the period of any adjournment of such proceeding in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later.

§5. Subparagraphs (i), (ii) and (iii) of paragraph (e) of subdivision 1 of section 424-a of the social services law, as amended by chapter 12 of the laws of 1996, are amended to read as follows:

(i) Subject to the provisions of subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the department shall inform the provider or licensing agency, or child care resource and referral programs pursuant to subdivision six of this section, whether or not the person is the subject of an indicated child abuse and maltreatment report only if: (a) the time for the subject of the report to request an amendment of the record of the report pursuant to subdivision eight of section four hundred twenty-two has expired without any such request having been made; or (b) such request was made within such time and a fair hearing regarding the request has been finally determined by the commissioner and the record of the report has not been amended to unfound the report or delete the person as a subject of the report. Where a request for an amendment of the record and/or a fair hearing has been made regarding an indicated report, but action on such request has been deferred because of the pendency of a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act, the department shall inform the provider or licensing agency or child care resource and referral program that there is an indicated report that is the subject of a pending Family Court proceeding. Once the department is informed by the child protective service or state agency, as applicable, that a disposition of the

Family Court proceeding has been ordered or a period of any adjournment of such proceeding in contemplation of dismissal has concluded, whichever is later, and the department has taken action regarding the request to amend or the fair hearing, the department shall inform the provider or licensing agency or child care resource and referral program of its action regarding the indicated report.

(ii) If the subject of an indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment has not requested an amendment of the record of the report within the time specified in subdivision eight of section four hundred twenty-two of this title or if the subject had a fair hearing pursuant to such section prior to January first, nineteen hundred eighty-six and an inquiry is made to the department pursuant to this subdivision concerning the subject of the report or where a request for an amendment of the record and/or a fair hearing has been made regarding an indicated report, but action on such request has been deferred because of the pendency of proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act, the department shall, as expeditiously as possible but within no more than ten working days of receipt of the inquiry, determine whether, in fact, the person about whom an inquiry is made is the subject of an indicated report. Upon making a determination that the person about whom the inquiry is made is the subject of an indicated report of child abuse and maltreatment, the department shall immediately send a written request to the child protective service or state agency which was responsible for investigating the allegations of abuse or maltreatment for all records, reports and other information maintained by the service or state agency on the subject. The service or state agency shall, as expeditiously as possible but within no more than twenty working days of receiving such request, forward all records, reports and other information it maintains on the indicated report to the department, including a copy of any petition and court order or orders with respect to a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act either pending or disposed of regarding such report. The department shall, within fifteen working days of receiving such records, reports and other information from the child protective service or state agency, review all records, reports and other information in its possession concerning the subject, and determine whether there is some credible evidence to find that the subject had committed the act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment giving rise to the indicated report. Where a proceeding pursuant to article ten of the family court act is pending with respect to a child named in the child abuse or maltreatment report, the child protective service or state agency, as applicable, shall report the status of the proceeding to the department, which shall defer its review and

determination until the disposition of such proceeding or until the conclusion of the period of any adjournment of such proceeding in contemplation of dismissal, whichever is later. Immediately upon the disposition of the proceeding or conclusion of any adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, the child protective service or state agency, as applicable, shall report the disposition of the proceeding or outcome of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal, to the department.

(iii) If it is determined, after affording such service or state agency a reasonable opportunity to present its views, that there is no credible evidence in the record to find that the subject committed such act or acts, the department shall amend the record to indicate that the report was unfounded and notify the inquiring party that the person about whom the inquiry is made is not the subject of an indicated report. In determining whether there is credible evidence that the subject committed the act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment giving rise to the indicated report, the fact that there is a family court finding of abuse or neglect against the subject in regard to an allegation contained in the report shall create an irrebuttable presumption that the allegation is substantiated by some credible evidence. If the subject of the report had a fair hearing pursuant to subdivision eight of section four hundred twenty-two of this title prior to January first, nineteen hundred eighty-six and the fair hearing had been finally determined by the commissioner and the record of the report had not been amended to unfound the report or delete the person as a subject of the report, then the department shall determine that there is some credible evidence to find that the subject had committed the act or acts of child abuse or maltreatment giving rise to the indicated report.

§6. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to requests for appeals and fair hearings pending as of such effective date.

2. Trial discharges of youth in foster care and voluntary re-placements of older adolescents into foster care (F.C.A. §§1055, 1091)

Experience in the Family Court and a vast array of literature has demonstrated that, all too often, adolescents age out of foster care upon reaching the age of 18 or shortly thereafter wholly unprepared to function in society. Although the Family Court Act permits them to consent to continued foster care with its attendant supports and services up until they reach the age of 21, many make precipitous decisions to show their independence and refuse to consent to remain in care even when they are desperately in need of assistance. Youth living in intact families are not faced with such decisions; they may leave home to attend college, but they do not abruptly terminate all connections with their families and often continue to receive financial and other aid. Youth leaving foster care, in contrast, often have no family to fall back on. For them, “independent living” may be akin to falling off a precipice. The permanency legislation enacted in 2005 contains salutary provisions requiring social services agencies to ensure that such youth leave care with a “significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource.” This requirement is helpful but often does not always fully meet the myriad needs of youth upon their discharge from foster care and during the period that immediately follows.

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee has joined with the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children, chaired by former Chief Judge Judith Kaye, in proposing legislation that would provide necessary supports – a vital “safety net” – for youth of foster care. The proposal would amend the trial discharge provisions of Articles 10 and 10-A of the Family Court Act to explicitly permit the Family Court to extend trial discharges at permanency hearings for successive periods of up to six months until youth reach the age of 21; extensions of trial discharges of youth over the age of 18 would require the youth’s consent. Additionally, the proposal would create a new Article 10-B of the Family Court Act that would permit youth between the ages of 18 and 21, who have been discharged from foster care within the past 24 months because of their failure to consent to continued care, to make motions before the Family Court that would enable them to return voluntarily to foster care. In such cases, the Family Court must find that the youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care, that the youth consents to attend an appropriate educational or vocational program and that such return is in the youth’s best interests. The youth would continue to be represented by the attorney who had previously provided representation, unless a new attorney is appointed, and the social services district would be entitled to notice and the right to be heard. Upon the granting of such a motion, the Court must schedule a permanency hearing to commence no later than 30 days after the hearing at which the child was returned to foster care. Corresponding amendments would be made to Article 10-A of the Family Court Act and Social Services Law §§371 and 409-a.

This proposal would not only provide adolescents with a means of obtaining assistance in making the often-difficult transition into adulthood, but would also provide an essential homelessness-prevention tool for communities and, importantly, for county and municipal social services districts. The Citizen’s Committee for Children of New York has reported that, “[c]hildren with foster care histories are more likely to experience homelessness as young adults;” thirty percent of youth in their study reported a foster care history and 31% had “aged out of foster care at 18 years old with no permanent housing arrangements.” The report noted the poor health, hunger and other

problems that ensue, problems costly to the children themselves, as well as to the communities in which they reside.⁵¹ Madelyn Freundlich, in a report prepared in conjunction with Children's Rights, Inc., Legal Aid Society and Lawyers for Children, documented the serious health problems, poor educational and employment outcomes, significant levels of homelessness and increased likelihood of arrest and incarceration experienced by youth after discharge from foster care.⁵² Similar problems were prevalent in a recent study of former foster youth in Florida.⁵³ Pat O'Brien, Executive Director of the agency, "You Gotta Believe," in a recent presentation, cited evidence that 60% of homeless adults in New York City shelters had a history of foster care, that 50% of youth coming to runaway and homeless youth shelters in the City had been in foster or congregate care, and that in a study of 168 youth at Covenant House in New York City, 27% reported that they had been in foster care and 43% reported that they had been in a congregate care setting.⁵⁴ Finally, the *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*, a comprehensive study of youth in Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin that was conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, provided national evidence of these problems. However, the study demonstrated strong evidence that delaying discharges of youth past the age of 18 results in higher incidence of youth pursuing higher education and significant evidence of increased earnings by youth and a greater tendency to delay pregnancies.⁵⁵

Significantly, the newly enacted Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351] provides resources for foster care for older youth. Although New York State had long covered the costs of foster care for youth between the ages of 18 and 21, the new law now gives states the option of collecting Federal Title IV-E foster care funds for this purpose. This provides a much-needed means of defraying existing state and local expenditures for foster care for this age-group, as well as a means of covering costs incurred as a result of reentry motions. But even more significant, by providing a means of preventing homelessness and crime among these youth, the savings in the costs of homeless shelters, prisons, hospitals and public assistance for these youth, not to mention the costs of crime to society, will more than outweigh any state or local share of the costs of reentry of youth into foster care.

Several other states have enacted legislation or promulgated policies that allow youth to reenter care for exactly the same reasons that compel enactment of this option in New York State, including, Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.⁵⁶ Arizona, Connecticut and Texas, for example, require conditions similar to those in the Committee's proposal regarding the commitment by the

⁵¹ Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, *Young and Homeless: A Look at Homeless Youth in New York City* (2006), pages 5, 8 [www.cccnewyork.org; .web-site visited 1/3/08].

⁵² M. Freundlich, *Time Running Out: Teens in Foster Care* (Children's Rights, Inc., Legal Aid Society and Lawyers for Children, Nov., 2003), pages 43-46.

⁵³ "Leaving Foster Care Like 'Falling Off a Cliff,'" *Miami Herald*, Jan. 4, 2008.

⁵⁴ P. O'Brien, "Youth Homelessness and the lack of Permanent Relational Planning for Teens in Foster care: Preventing Homelessness Through Relationship" (Presentation at NYS Citizen's Coalition for Children, Inc., May, 2006)[www.nysccc.org/Conferences/2006Conf/2006Conf Handout/homelessness.htm; web-site visited 1/3/08].

⁵⁵ M. Courtney, A. Dworsky & H. Pollack, *When Should the State Cease Parenting? Evidence from the Midwest Study* (Chapin Hall, Univ. of Chicago, Issue Brief #115 (Dec., 2007)[www.chapinhall.org; web-site visited 1/3/08].

⁵⁶ Source: Child Welfare League of America (chart distributed at Community Forum on Implementation of the *Fostering Connections Act* on Dec. 8, 2009).

youth to engage in educational or vocational activities. *See* Ariz. Rev. Stat. §§202, 521.01; Conn. Gen. Stat. §§17a-93, 46(b)-121; Texas “Return to Care Policy” (Oct., 2007)(www.dfps.state.tx.us, accessed Jan. 7, 2010).

Clearly, greater assistance must be made available to youth facing the formidable challenges of finding housing and employment, accessing health-care, achieving successful educational outcomes and functioning successfully in society. Enactment of this proposal would empower youth to access needed services, enhance the ability of counties to provide assistance to youth that will help prevent costly homelessness and incarceration and provide the Family Court with a greater ability to provide effective oversight over the progress of youth in the transition out of foster care and into the community. Both elements – the ability to extend trial discharges and to reinstate youth into foster care – are critically important to ensure that the achievement of permanency for youth is successful.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to trial discharges of youth in foster care and voluntary re-placements of older adolescents into foster care

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subparagraph (E) of paragraph (i) of subdivision (b) and subdivision (e) of section 1055 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, are amended to read as follows:

(E) where the permanency goal is return to the parent and it is anticipated that the child may be finally discharged to his or her parent before the next scheduled permanency hearing, the court may provide the local social services district with authority to finally discharge the child to the parent without further court hearing, provided that ten days prior written notice is served upon the court and [law guardian] attorney for the child. If the court on its own motion or the [law guardian] attorney for the child on motion to the court does not request the matter to be brought for review before final discharge, no further permanency hearings will be required. The local social services district may also discharge the child on a trial basis to the parent unless the court has prohibited such trial discharge or unless the court has conditioned such trial discharge on another event. For the purposes of this section, trial discharge shall mean that the child is physically returned to the parent while the child remains in the care and custody of the local social services district. Permanency hearings shall continue to be held for any child who has returned to his or

her parents on a trial discharge. Where the permanency goal for a [child] youth aging out of foster care is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the [child] youth, the local social services district may also discharge the [child] youth on a trial basis to the planned permanent living arrangements, unless the court has prohibited or otherwise conditioned such a trial discharge. Trial discharge for a [child] youth aging out of foster care shall mean that a [child] youth is physically discharged but the local social services district retains care and custody or custody and guardianship of the [child] youth and there remains a date certain for the scheduled permanency hearing. Trial discharge for a youth aging out of foster care may be extended at each scheduled permanency hearing, until the child reaches the age of twenty-one, if a child over the age of eighteen consents to such extension. Prior to finally discharging a youth aging out of foster care to another planned permanent living arrangement, the local social services official shall give the youth notice of the right to apply to reenter foster care within the earlier of twenty-four months of the final discharge or the youth's twenty-first birthday in accordance with article ten-B of this act. Such notice shall also advise the youth that reentry into foster care will only be available where the former foster care youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care and consents to enrollment in and attendance at an appropriate educational or vocational program in accordance with paragraph two of subdivision (a) of section one thousand ninety-one of this act. Children placed under this section shall be placed until the court completes the initial permanency hearing scheduled pursuant to article ten-A of this act. Should the court determine pursuant to article ten-A of this act that placement shall be extended beyond completion of the scheduled permanency hearing, such extended placement and any such successive extensions of placement shall expire at the completion of the next scheduled permanency hearing, unless the court shall determine, pursuant to article ten-A of this act, to continue to extend such placement.

(e) No placement may be made or continued under this section beyond the child's eighteenth birthday without his or her consent and in no event past his or her twenty-first birthday. However, a former foster care youth under the age of twenty-one who was previously discharged from foster care due to a failure to consent to continuation of placement may make a motion pursuant to section one thousand ninety-one of this act to return to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges. In

such motion, the youth must consent to enrollment in and attendance at a vocational or educational program in accordance with paragraph two of subdivision (A) of section one thousand ninety-one of this act.

§2. Subdivision (a) section 1087 of the family court act, as added by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(a) "Child" shall mean a person under the age of eighteen who is placed in foster care pursuant to section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-four or three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law or pursuant to section one thousand twenty-two, one thousand twenty-seven, or one thousand fifty-two of this act; or directly placed with a relative pursuant to section one thousand seventeen or one thousand fifty-five of this act; or who has been freed for adoption or a person between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one who has consented to continuation in foster care or trial discharge status; or a former foster care youth under the age of twenty-one for whom a court has granted a motion to permit the former foster care youth to return to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges.

§3. Section 1088 of the family court act, as added by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

§1088. Continuing court jurisdiction. If a child is placed pursuant to section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-four, or three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law, or pursuant to section one thousand seventeen, one thousand twenty-two, one thousand twenty-seven or one thousand fifty-two of this act, or directly placed with a relative pursuant to section one thousand seventeen or one thousand fifty-five of this act; or if the child is freed for adoption pursuant to section three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, the case shall remain on the court's calendar and the court shall maintain jurisdiction over the case until the child is discharged from placement and all orders regarding supervision, protection or services have expired. The court shall rehear the matter whenever it deems necessary or desirable, or upon motion by any party entitled to notice in proceedings under this article, or by the [law guardian] attorney for the child, and whenever a permanency hearing is required by this article. While the court maintains jurisdiction over the case, the provisions of section one thousand thirty-eight of this act shall continue to apply. The court shall

also maintain jurisdiction over a case for purposes of hearing a motion to permit a former foster care youth under the age of twenty-one who was discharged from foster care due to a failure to consent to continuation of placement to return to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges.

§4. Paragraph 1 of subdivision (a) of section 1089 of the family court act, as added by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(1) Children freed for adoption. (i) At the conclusion of the dispositional hearing at which the child was freed for adoption in a proceeding pursuant to section three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, the court shall set a date certain for the initial freed child permanency hearing and advise all parties in court of the date set, except for the respondent or respondents. The permanency hearing shall be commenced no later than thirty days after the hearing at which the child was freed and shall be completed within thirty days, unless the court determines to hold the permanency hearing immediately upon completion of the hearing at which the child was freed, provided adequate notice has been given.

(ii) At the conclusion of the hearing pursuant to section one thousand ninety-one of this act where the court has granted the motion for a former foster care youth who was discharged from foster care due to a failure to consent to continuation of placement to return to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges, the court shall set a date certain for a permanency hearing and advise all parties in court of the date set. The permanency hearing shall be commenced no later than thirty days after the hearing at which the former foster care youth was returned to foster care.

§5. Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act, as added by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(ii) placing the child in the custody of a fit and willing relative or other suitable person, or continuing the placement of the child until the completion of the next permanency hearing, provided, however, that no placement may be continued under this section beyond the child's eighteenth birthday without his or her consent and in no event past the child's twenty-first birthday; provided, however, that a former foster youth who was previously discharged from foster care due to a failure to consent to continuation of placement may be returned to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children

as public charges if the court has granted the motion of the former foster care youth or local social services official upon a finding that the youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care and has consented to enrollment in and attendance at a vocational or educational program in accordance with section one thousand ninety-one of this act;

§6. Clause (C) of subparagraph (viii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 437 of the laws of 2006, is amended to read as follows:

(C) Where the permanency goal is return to parent and it is anticipated that the child may be returned home before the next scheduled permanency hearing, the court may provide the local social services district with authority to finally discharge the child to the parent without further court hearing, provided that ten days prior written notice is served upon the court and [law guardian] attorney for child. If the court on its own motion or the [law guardian] attorney for the child on motion to the court does not request the matter to be brought for review before final discharge, no further permanency hearings will be required. The local social services district may also discharge the child on a trial basis to the parent unless the court has prohibited such trial discharge or unless the court has conditioned such trial discharge on another event. For the purposes of this section, trial discharge shall mean that the child is physically returned to the parent while the child remains in the care and custody of the local social services district. Permanency hearings shall continue to be held for any child who has returned to his or her parents on a trial discharge. Where the permanency goal for a [child] youth aging out of foster care is another planned permanent living arrangement that includes a significant connection to an adult willing to be a permanency resource for the [child] youth, the local social services district may also discharge the [child] youth on a trial basis to the planned permanent living arrangements, unless the court has prohibited or otherwise conditioned such a trial discharge. Trial discharge for a [child] youth aging out of foster care shall mean that [a child] the youth is physically discharged but the local social services district retains care and custody or custody and guardianship of the child and there remains a date certain for the scheduled permanency hearing. Trial discharge for a youth aging out of foster care may be extended at each scheduled permanency hearing, until the youth reaches the age of twenty-one, if a youth over the age of eighteen consents to such extension. Prior to finally discharging a youth aging out of foster care to another planned permanent living arrangement, the local social services official shall give the youth notice of the right to reenter foster care

within the earlier of twenty-four months of the final discharge or the youth's twenty-first birthday in accordance with article ten-B of this act. Such notice shall also advise the youth that reentry into foster care will only be available where the former foster care youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care and consents to enrollment in and attendance at an appropriate educational or vocational program in accordance with paragraph two of subdivision (a) of section one thousand ninety-one of this act.

§7. Subdivision (a) of section 1090, as added by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(a) If [a law guardian] an attorney for the child has been appointed by the family court in a proceeding pursuant to section three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four, or three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law, or article ten of this act, the appointment of the [law guardian] attorney shall continue without further court order or appointment, unless another appointment of [a law guardian] an attorney has been made by the court, until the child is discharged from placement and all orders regarding supervision, protection or services have expired. The attorney shall also represent the child without further order or appointment in any proceedings under article ten-B of this act. All notices, reports and motions required by law shall be provided to such [law guardian] attorney. The [law guardian] attorney may be relieved of his or her representation upon application to the court for termination of the appointment. Upon approval of the application, the court shall immediately appoint another [law guardian] attorney to whom all notices, reports, and motions required by law shall be provided.

§8. The family court act is amended by adding a new article 10-B of the family court act to read as follows:

Article 10-B

Former Foster Care Youth Re-entry Proceedings

§1091. Motion to return to foster care placement. A motion to return a former foster care youth under the age of twenty-one, who was discharged from foster care due to a failure to consent to continuation of placement, to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges, may be made by such former foster care youth, or by a local social services official upon the consent of such former foster care youth, if there is a compelling reason for such former foster care youth to return to foster care;

provided however, that the court shall not entertain a motion filed after twenty-four months from the date of the first final discharge that occurred on or after the former foster care youth's eighteenth birthday.

(a) Motion by a local social services official. A motion made pursuant to this section by a social services official shall be made by order to show cause. Such motion shall show by affidavit or other evidence that:

(1) the former foster care youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care;

(2) the former foster care youth consents to enrollment in and attendance at an appropriate educational or vocational program, unless evidence is submitted that such enrollment or attendance is unnecessary or inappropriate, given the particular circumstances of the youth;

(3) re-entry into foster care is in the best interests of the former foster care youth; and

(4) the former foster care youth consents to the re-entry into foster care.

(b) Motion made by former foster care youth. A motion made pursuant to this section by a former foster care youth shall be made by order to show cause or ten days notice to the social services official. Such motion shall show by affidavit or other evidence that:

(1) the requirements outlined in paragraphs one, two and three of subdivision (a) of this section are met; and

(2) the applicable local social services district consents to the re-entry of such former foster care youth, or if the applicable local social services district refuses to consent to the re-entry of such former foster care youth and that such refusal is unreasonable.

(c) Additional findings made by the court. (1) If at any time during the pendency of a proceeding brought pursuant to this section the court finds a compelling reason that it is in the best interests of the former foster care youth to be returned immediately to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges pending a final decision on the motion, the court may issue a temporary order returning the youth to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges.

(2) Where the local social services district has refused to consent to the re-entry of a

former foster care youth, and where it is alleged pursuant to paragraph two of subdivision (b) of this section, that such refusal by such social services district is unreasonable, the court shall grant a motion made pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section if the court finds and states in writing that the refusal by the local social services district is unreasonable. For purposes of this section, a court shall find that a refusal by a local social services district to allow a former foster care youth to re-enter care is unreasonable if:

(i) the youth has no reasonable alternative to foster care;

(ii) the youth consents to enrollment in and attendance at an appropriate educational or vocational program, unless the court finds a compelling reason that such enrollment or attendance is unnecessary or inappropriate, given the particular circumstances of the youth; and

(iii) re-entry into foster care is in the best interests of the former foster youth.

(3) Subsequent motions. Upon making a determination on a motion filed pursuant to this section, where a motion has previously been granted pursuant to this section, in addition to the applicable findings required by subdivision (a), (b) or (c) of this section, the court shall grant the motion to return a former foster care youth to the custody of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges only:

(i) upon a finding that there is a compelling reason for such former foster care youth to return to care;

(ii) if the court has not previously granted a subsequent motion for such former foster care youth to return to care pursuant to this paragraph; and

(ii) upon consideration of the former foster care youth's compliance with previous orders of the court, including the youth's previous participation in an appropriate educational or vocational program, if applicable.

§9. Paragraph (d) of subdivision 3 of section 371 of the social services law is amended and a new paragraph (e) is added to such subdivision to read as follows:

(d) a person under the age of eighteen who is without a place of shelter where supervision and care are available, or

(e) a former foster care youth under the age of twenty-one who was previously placed in the care and custody or custody and guardianship of the local commissioner of social services or

other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges, and who was discharged from foster care due to a failure to consent to continuation in placement, who has returned to foster care pursuant to section one thousand ninety-one of the family court act.

§10. Subparagraph (i) of paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of section 409-a of the social services law, as amended by chapter 83 of the laws of 2002, is amended to read as follows:

(i) the child will be placed, returned to or continued in foster care unless such services are provided and that it is reasonable to believe that by providing such services the child will be able to remain with or be returned to his or her family, and for a former foster care youth under the age of twenty-one who was previously placed in the care and custody or custody and guardianship of the local commissioner of social services or other officer, board or department authorized to receive children as public charges where it is reasonable to believe that by providing such services the former foster care youth will avoid a return to foster care, or

§11. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

3. Orders for genetic testing in child protective proceedings
(F.C.A. §§532, 564, 1035, 1089)

Family Court Act §564 permits the Family Court, in proceedings other than paternity proceedings, such as child abuse, child neglect and permanency proceedings, to adjudicate paternity where both parents are before the court, the putative father waives the right to the filing of a separate paternity petition and the right to a hearing and the court is satisfied as to the child's paternity based upon sworn statements or testimony. Where these conditions are not met, the court may direct either party, the child, the child's guardian or other person authorized under Family Court Act §522 to file a separate verified paternity petition. However, the statute is silent regarding any authority for the Family Court to direct genetic testing of any party or the child. This gap in the law has created a roadblock for permanency planning for many children in child protective and permanency proceedings by impeding the early identification both of children's fathers and of paternal grandparents and other relatives who may be suitable resources for the children.

The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is therefore proposing a measure that would address this problem. It would amend sections 532 and 564 of the Family Court Act to authorize the court to order genetic testing in non-paternity proceedings upon the consent of both parents. Where consent is not obtained, the court would be permitted to direct any party to file a verified paternity petition. Where the mother's consent is not forthcoming by reason of her absence from the court, the court would be authorized to direct genetic testing so long as she had received notice and an opportunity to be heard. DNA testing can now be performed with a high degree of scientific accuracy with samples taken solely from the child and putative father, a procedure commonly known as a "motherless calculation." As in paternity cases, no test would be ordered in cases where the court has made a written finding that testing would not be in the child's best interests by reason of *res judicata*, equitable estoppel or the presumption of legitimacy. Further, Family Court Act §564 would be amended to permit the Family Court to adjudicate paternity on the basis of genetic testing, not simply on the basis of sworn statements or testimony. Corresponding amendments would be made to child protective and permanency provisions of the Family Court Act [Family Court Act §§1035, 1089].

Enactment of a procedural vehicle for the expeditious establishment of paternity of children who are the subjects of child protective and permanency proceedings is of the utmost importance. It would further the legislative goal of early identification of non-respondent fathers and of the pool of paternal grandparents and other relatives who may provide far better alternatives for children than stranger foster care. The legislature's passage of the *Adoption and Safe Families Act* in 1999, the permanency legislation in 2005 and the various amendments to Family Court Act §1017, 1035 and related provisions all reflect an acknowledgment of the vital role that can and should be played by fathers and their kin in furthering permanency for children, particularly those who would otherwise require stranger foster care. Where neglect or abuse petitions have been filed or where voluntary placement instruments have been executed, the Family Court Act and Social Services Law require social service agencies to attempt to identify, locate and notify non-respondent parents and relatives. Facilitating adjudications of paternity would substantially assist in the fulfillment of these mandates.

The issue of paternity arises frequently in child protective and permanency proceedings in light of the large number of children before the Family Court who come from non-marital families and who may be the products of transitory or intermittent relationships. Often a person believing himself to be the father or a paternal grandparent or another paternal relative comes to court and seeks to care for or plan for an allegedly abused or neglected child. Sometimes more than one possible father appears. If paternity has not already been legally established through execution of an acknowledgment of paternity or through a judicial order of filiation, the court entertaining the child protective case must resolve the issue as soon as possible so that the child can be placed with the father or other family members and so that permanency planning for the child can proceed with dispatch. If the requirements of current Family Court Act §564 are not met – if, for example, the mother is not before the court or the court doubts the veracity of the mother’s statement concerning paternity – the court’s only alternative is to direct one of the parents to file a paternity petition. All too often this direction is not followed or the alleged father is unable to serve the petition on the mother whose whereabouts may be unknown. In such situations, the child’s paternity may remain undetermined while the child lingers in foster care even though genetic testing, including the “motherless calculation” that can be performed in the mother’s absence, could have swiftly resolved the issue.

Permitting the court to order genetic testing in the context of a child protective or permanency proceeding would provide a quick answer to questions regarding a child’s paternity and would thus eliminate a significant roadblock on the child’s path to a safe, healthy and permanent home. Identification of a child’s parentage would not only permit location of relatives who may be resources for the child, but may also serve to identify siblings who may be able to develop significant relationships with the child. Equally significant, establishment of paternity would benefit the child by widening the availability of medical and other genetic information and by establishing the child’s right to child support, medical and other insurance and inheritance from the father. Significant benefits to children, their immediate and extended families, social services agencies and the Family Court would thus result from enactment of the Committee’s proposal.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to paternity testing and adjudications in child protective proceedings in the family court

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 532 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (d) to read as follows:

(d) In any proceeding in the family court, whether under this act or under any other law, if there is an allegation or statement in a petition that a person is the father of a child, who is a subject

of the proceeding but paternity has not been established, the court may, upon the consent of the alleged father and mother, make an order for the alleged father, mother and child to submit to one or more genetic marker or DNA tests, in accordance with the provisions of this section. Where the mother or alleged father of the child does not consent to the testing, the court may direct any party empowered under section five hundred twenty-two of this article to file a verified petition under section five hundred twenty-three of this article to establish paternity. If the mother is not before the court, the court may nonetheless make an order for genetic marker or DNA testing if the court finds that she has been given notice and an opportunity to be heard, No such test shall be ordered, however, upon a written finding by the court that it is not in the best interests of the child on the basis of res judicata, equitable estoppel, or the presumption of legitimacy of a child born to a married woman.

§2. Subdivisions (b) and (c) of section 564 of the family court act, as added by chapter 440 of the laws of 1978, are amended to read as follows:

(b) The court may make such an order of filiation if

(1) both parents are before the court, and

(2) the father waives both the filing of a petition under section five hundred twenty-three of this act and the right to a hearing under section five hundred [thirty-three] thirty-one of this act, and

(3) the court is satisfied as to the paternity of the child from the testimony or sworn statements of the parents or from the results of genetic testing performed in accordance with section five hundred thirty-two of this act. If the mother is not before the court, the court may make an order of filiation based upon the results of genetic testing ordered pursuant to subdivision (d) of section five hundred thirty-two of this act.

(c) The court may in any such proceeding in its discretion direct either the mother or any other person empowered under section five hundred twenty-two of this act to file a verified petition under section five hundred twenty-three of this act. The court may in any such proceeding, upon its own motion or upon the motion of either parent or alleged parent or the child, direct the alleged father, mother and child to submit to one or more genetic marker or DNA tests, in accordance with the provisions of section five hundred thirty-two of this act. No such test shall be ordered, however, upon a written finding by the court that it is not in the best interests of the child on the basis of res judicata, equitable estoppel, or the presumption of legitimacy of a child born to a married woman.

§3. Section 1035 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (g) to read as follows:

(g) In any case in which paternity has not been established regarding a child who is the subject of a petition under this article and an alleged father is before the court, the court may direct genetic testing in accordance with section five hundred thirty-two of this act, may direct the filing of a paternity petition in accordance with section five hundred twenty-three of this act or may adjudicate paternity pursuant to section five hundred sixty-four of this act.

§4. Subparagraph (viii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act is amended by adding a new clause (I) to read as follows:

(I) In any case in which paternity has not been established regarding a child who is the subject of a hearing under this article and an alleged father is before the court, the court may direct genetic testing in accordance with section five hundred thirty-two of this act, may direct the filing of a paternity petition in accordance with section five hundred twenty-three of this act or may adjudicate paternity pursuant to section five hundred sixty-four of this act.

§5. This act shall take effect immediately.

4. Putative fathers entitled consent to adoptions and to notice of adoption, surrender and termination of parental proceedings (D.R.L. §§111, 111-a; S.S.L. §384-c)

In 1979, the United States Supreme Court, in Caban v. Mohammed, 441 US 388 (1979), held a statute unconstitutional that failed to afford a birth father the right to consent to his child's adoption, where he had lived with the mother, admitted paternity and had a substantial relationship with, and provided support to, the child. Following Caban, the Legislature enacted new criteria defining those putative or non-marital fathers who are entitled to consent to adoptions ("consent fathers") and those who are entitled simply to notice of termination of parental rights, surrender and adoption proceedings ("notice-only fathers"). Those entitled to notice only may be heard regarding the children's best interests but do not have veto power over their adoptions. Laws of 1980, ch. 575. Notwithstanding the Legislature's goals of providing "reasonable, unambiguous and objective" criteria for notice and consent,⁵⁷ experience with the 1980 statute has demonstrated that it fulfills none of those intentions. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is, therefore, proposing a measure to expand and objectify both the criteria for non-marital fathers to consent to adoptions and the criteria for those entitled to notice of, but not veto power over, adoptions.

1. Consent fathers [Domestic Relations Law §111]:

The Committee's proposal establishes a new, objective benchmark for determining the applicable criteria for assessing whether a putative father should be accorded the status of a "consent father." Current law establishes different criteria for determining whether a non-marital father is a "consent father," depending upon whether a child was less than or more than six months old when the child was "placed with the adoptive parents." *See* Domestic Relations Law §§111(1)(d), 111(1)(e). The Committee's proposal would substitute the "time of the filing of a petition to terminate parental rights, application to execute a judicial surrender, petition for approval of an extra-judicial surrender or extra-judicial consent to adoption or petition for adoption, whichever is earliest" for the phrases "placed with the adoptive parents" and "placed for adoption."⁵⁸

The phrase "placed with the adoptive parents" has generated decades of confusion over whether it denotes the original placement with the particular adoptive family at a point where their status was not yet "adoptive" or the later point at which the adoptive parents signed an adoptive placement agreement or, alternatively, the hard-to-pinpoint moment at which foster parents were identified by the child care agency as the adoptive resources for the child. Interpretation of the phrase to connote the point at which the adoptive parents signed an adoptive placement agreement has been problematic, since it, in effect, has rendered the six-month distinction inapplicable to the vast majority of foster children, virtually all of whom are over six months old at the point where the agreement has been signed. As the Appellate Division, First Department, recognized in dicta in Matter of Tasha M., 33 A.D.3d 387 (1st Dept., 2006), such an interpretation is not meaningful, since the determination whether a person is a "consent father" is a "threshold issue" that must generally

⁵⁷ Sponsor's Memorandum, 1980 NYS Leg. Ann. 242-243.

⁵⁸ Inclusion of the filing of the adoption petition as one of the criteria addresses situations, more common in private adoptions, in which a child is freed for adoption within the adoption proceeding, with no prior actions filed.

be determined well in advance of the signing of an adoptive placement agreement. In fact, statutes and regulations preclude the signing of the adoptive placement agreement until the child has already been freed for adoption, but the Family or Surrogate's Court is required to make a determination regarding "consent fathers" as a part of a termination of parental rights proceeding.⁵⁹ The Committee's proposal would instead articulate a far more readily-identifiable point in time for determining whether to apply the over-six-months or under-six-months criteria.

Using the new benchmark for those children who were over six months old, the Committee's proposal recognizes additional categories of non-marital fathers who should be accorded the right to consent to adoptions of their children.⁶⁰ Those criteria would include, *inter alia*, those named on a child's birth certificate or acknowledgment of paternity, those adjudicated as fathers in New York or another state or territory, those who maintained substantial and continuous or repeated contact with the child through visits at least twice per month or through regular communication, and those who lived with the child for six months immediately prior to the earlier point of the child's placement in foster care or placement for adoption.

Affording non-marital fathers named on the child's birth certificate or acknowledgment of paternity, or adjudicated as fathers in New York or another state or territory, the right to consent to the adoption of their children reflects the increasing recognition and utilization of these means of establishing fatherhood. The Federal *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Recognition Act* [Public Law 104-193] required states, as a condition of receiving Federal child support funding under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, to implement simple means of legally establishing paternity through voluntary acknowledgments, including hospital-based programs to encourage their use, and to accord full faith and credit to acknowledgments from other states – requirements that have sharply increased the use and recognition of acknowledgments nationally. Further, the Act required genetic testing to be admissible in paternity proceedings and to be presumptive proof of paternity, changes that have increased paternity adjudications and have reduced contested cases. *See* 42 U.S.C.A. §666(a)(5).⁶¹ Taken together these changes, accompanied by parallel increases in societal perceptions of the status of fathers of out-of-wedlock children, militate in favor of recognizing fathers whose paternity has been established through these means as "consent fathers."

Additionally, the Committee's proposal retains but, again, clarifies the alternative behavioral criteria for establishing the status of a "consent father." Apart from legally establishing paternity, non-marital fathers may demonstrate their entitlement to be "consent fathers" through maintaining "substantial and continuous or repeated contact with the child." This may be demonstrated by payment of child support, visiting the child, regularly communicating with the child or living with the child for a six-month period.. The proposal would modify the visiting criterion to require visits

⁵⁹ *See* Social Services Law §384-b(12); 18 N.Y.C.R.R. §§421.1(d), 421.18(3)(1).

⁶⁰ The Committee's proposal does not address the "consent father" criteria applicable to children under six months old, the subject of a Committee proposal in prior years. *See* D.R.L. §111(1)(e). Since the Court of Appeals, in *Matter of Racquel Marie X.*, 76 N.Y.2d 387(1990), *cert. denied*, 498 U.S. 984 (1991), ruled unconstitutional the criterion requiring the putative father to have lived with the mother for six months prior to the child's birth, criteria articulated in that decision, rather than the statutory criteria, have been applied to putative fathers of those children.

⁶¹ Voluntary paternity acknowledgment procedures and full faith and credit requirements in New York are delineated in Public Health Law §4135-b, Social Services Law §111-k and Family Court Act §516-a.

twice per month, the standard for foster care visiting contained in the regulations of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. *See* 18 N.Y.C.R.R. §430.12(c)(4)(ii)(d)(1)(i). Further, with respect to the living-together criterion, it would substitute a six-month period “immediately preceding the earlier of the placement of the child for adoption or placement of the child in foster care” for the existing requirement of “six months within the one year period immediately preceding the placement of the child for adoption.”⁶²

Elevation of legally adjudicated and acknowledged fathers to "consent fathers" from their current status as "notice only" fathers is consistent with the mandates in the recently-enacted permanency legislation for early identification of suitable non-respondent parents, as well as relatives (both paternal and maternal), with whom children who are the subjects of child protective proceedings might reside. *See* Family Court Act §1017 [Laws of 2005, ch. 3]. Non-respondent parents must be given notice of the pendency of child protective proceedings and permanency hearings, information regarding where their children have been placed and how they can enforce their rights to visitation, and a warning that they are subject to possible termination of parental rights if they don't involve themselves in planning for their children on a timely basis. *See* Family Court Act §1035, 1089(b)(1)(i). Child protective and child care agencies' continuing obligations to identify and plan with the fathers of children in their care and to document those efforts are clear from the inception of children's placement in foster care – part of a salutary national trend to spur early identification and involvement of fathers.⁶³ Fathers who come forward promptly, cooperate in permanency planning efforts, maintain regular contact with their children and fulfill their roles as fathers clearly merit the entitlement afforded by the Committee's proposal to consent to the adoption of their children.

2. Notice-only fathers [Domestic Relations Law §111-a; Social Services Law §384-c]: In addition to augmenting the alternatives for establishing status as a “consent father,” the Committee's proposal would add two categories of individuals who would be entitled to notice of termination of parental rights, surrender and adoption proceedings and the opportunity in those proceedings to be heard regarding their children's best interests. The proposal would retain as "notice-only" fathers those named by mothers in written sworn statements and those who have merely filed an intent to claim paternity with the putative father registry. Both of those are unilateral actions, do not carry a support obligation, and are revocable at will, thus warranting retention of the more limited “notice-only” status.⁶⁴

⁶² Read literally, the existing six-month criterion could only apply to the father of a foster child if the child were surrendered for adoption virtually immediately upon placement in foster care. The minimum thresholds of time in foster care for involuntary termination of parental rights are six months for abandonment and one year for all other grounds, except severe or repeated child abuse.

⁶³ *See* NYS Office of Children and Family Services, *Locating Absent Fathers and Extended Family Guidance Paper* (Informational Letter 05-OCFS-INF-05, Sept., 2005); *What About the Dads? Child Welfare Agencies' Efforts to Identify, Locate and Involve Nonresident Fathers* (US HHS ACYF Children's Bureau, 2006).

⁶⁴ They thus stand in sharp contrast to paternity acknowledgments, pursuant to Public Health Law §4135-b, which must be signed by both parents and have strict Federal time-limits and criteria that must be met before they can be revoked. *See* 42 U.S.C.A. §666(a)(5)(D)(ii). *See also* Family Court Act §516-a(b); Social Services Law §111-k.

The first new category of “notice-only fathers” would include individuals who have filed, served upon the agency and thereafter appeared in court on custody petitions during their children’s most recent stays in foster care. This category reflects concern for the right to be heard of a non-marital father, whose attempts to assert his status as father may have been frustrated by the mother’s unavailability or the child care agency’s unresponsiveness, but who nonetheless has taken some concrete action. The second new category would be comprised of individuals identified in an acknowledgment or order of paternity in another country that has been determined by the Family or Surrogate’s Court to be entitled to comity in New York State. With respect to the second category, the Court must determine whether the foreign paternity adjudication or acknowledgment warrants treatment of the non-marital father as a “notice-only father,” pursuant to Domestic Relations Law §111-a or Social Services Law §384-c, or whether he should be entitled to consent to his child’s adoption, pursuant to Domestic Relations Law §111.

Advances in establishment of paternity and enhanced expectations concerning the role of non-marital fathers in their children’s lives warrant a realignment both of the requirements for consent to adoption by fathers of children born out of wedlock and for notice to fathers of termination, surrender and adoption proceedings. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee’s proposal provides that necessary realignment and in so doing will enhance the effectiveness of the permanency planning process for children before the Court.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the domestic relations law and the social services law, in relation to notices to non-marital fathers in adoption, surrenders and termination of parental rights proceedings and consents to adoptions in family and surrogate’s courts

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Paragraph (d) and the opening sentence of paragraph (e) of subdivision 1 of section 111 of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 575 of the laws of 1980, are amended to read as follows:

(d) Of the father, whether adult or infant, of a child born out-of-wedlock and [placed with the adoptive parents] more than six months [after birth] old at the time of the filing of a petition to terminate parental rights, application to execute a judicial surrender, petition for approval of an extra-judicial surrender or extra-judicial consent to adoption or petition for adoption, whichever is earliest, but only if such father shall have:

(i) been named as the father on the child’s birth certificate; or

(ii) been adjudicated as the father by a court in the State of New York; or

(iii) been adjudicated by a court of another state or territory of the United States to be the father of the child, when a certified copy of the court order has been filed with the putative father registry, pursuant to section three hundred seventy-two-c of the social services law; or

(iv) acknowledged paternity in a form duly executed pursuant to section four thousand one hundred thirty-five-b of the public health law or in a form recognized by the state or territory of the United States in which it was executed to have the force and effect of an order of paternity or filiation; or

(v) maintained substantial and continuous or repeated contact with the child [out-of-wedlock and placed with the adoptive parents more than six months after birth] as manifested by [: (i)] the payment by the father toward the support of the child of a fair and reasonable sum, according to the father's means, and either

[(ii)]A. the father's visiting the child at least [monthly] twice per month when physically and financially able to do so and not prevented from doing so by the person or authorized agency having lawful custody of the child, or

[(iii)] B. the father's regular communication with the child or with the person or agency having the care or custody of the child, when physically and financially unable to visit the child or prevented from doing so by the person or authorized agency having lawful custody of the child. [The] For purposes of this subparagraph, the subjective intent of the father, whether expressed or otherwise, unsupported by evidence of acts specified in this paragraph manifesting such intent, shall not preclude a determination that the father failed to maintain substantial and continuous or repeated contact with the child. In making such a determination, the court shall not require a showing of diligent efforts by any person or agency to encourage the father to perform the acts specified in this paragraph.

(vi) A father, whether adult or infant, of a child born out-of-wedlock, who openly lived with the child for a period of six months [within the one year period] immediately preceding the earlier of the placement of the child for adoption or placement of the child in foster care and who during such period openly held himself out to be the father of such child shall be deemed to have maintained substantial and continuous contact with the child for the purpose of this [subdivision] paragraph.

(e) Of the father, whether adult or infant, of a child born out-of-wedlock who is under the

age of six months [at the time he is placed for adoption] old at the time of the filing of a petition to terminate parental rights, application to execute a judicial surrender, petition for approval of an extra-judicial surrender or extra-judicial consent to adoption or petition for adoption, whichever is earliest, but only if:

§2. Subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 111-a of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 575 of the laws of 1980, are amended to read as follows:

1. Notwithstanding any inconsistent provisions of this or any other law, and in addition to the notice requirements of any law pertaining to persons other than those specified in subdivision two of this section, notice as provided herein shall be given to the persons specified in subdivision two of this section of any adoption proceeding initiated pursuant to this article or of any proceeding initiated pursuant to section one hundred fifteen-b relating to the revocation of an adoption consent, when such proceeding involves a child born out-of-wedlock provided, however, that such notice shall not be required to be given to any person who previously has been given notice of any [proceeding] petition to terminate parental rights, application to execute a judicial surrender, petition for approval of an extra-judicial surrender or extra-judicial consent to adoption involving the child[, pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-c of the social services law,] and provided further that notice in an adoption proceeding, pursuant to this section shall not be required to be given to any person who has previously received notice of any proceeding pursuant to section one hundred fifteen-b. In addition to such other requirements as may be applicable to the petition in any proceeding in which notice must be given pursuant to this section, the petition shall set forth the names and last known addresses of all persons required to be given notice of the proceeding, pursuant to this section, and there shall be shown by the petition or by affidavit or other proof satisfactory to the court that there are no persons other than those set forth in the petition who are entitled to notice. For the purpose of determining persons entitled to notice of adoption proceedings initiated pursuant to this article, persons specified in subdivision two of this section shall not include any person who has been convicted of rape in the first degree involving forcible compulsion, under subdivision one of section 130.35 of the penal law, when the child who is the subject of the proceeding was conceived as a result of such rape.

2. Persons entitled to notice, pursuant to subdivision one of this section, shall include:

(a) [any person adjudicated by a court in this state to be the father of the child;

(b) any person adjudicated by a court of another state or territory of the United States to be the father of the child, when a certified copy of the court order has been filed with the putative father registry, pursuant to section three hundred seventy-two-c of the social services law;

(c) any person who has timely filed an unrevoked notice of intent to claim paternity of the child, pursuant to section three hundred seventy-two-c of the social services law;

[(d) any person who is recorded on the child's birth certificate as the child's father;

(e) (b) any person who is openly living with the child and the child's mother at the time the proceeding is initiated and who is holding himself out to be the child's father;

[(f) (c) any person who has been identified as the child's father by the mother in a written, sworn statement;

[(g) (d) any person who was married to the child's mother within six months subsequent to the birth of the child and prior to the execution of a surrender instrument or the initiation of a proceeding pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law; [and

(h) any person who has filed with the putative father registry an instrument acknowledging paternity of the child, pursuant to section 4-1.2 of the estates, powers and trusts law] (e) any person who, subsequent to the child's most recent entry into foster care, has filed and served a custody petition upon the agency having care and custody of the child and who appeared in court on that petition on the date for return of process; and

(f) any person identified as the father in an order of paternity or filiation or an acknowledgment of paternity in another country that has been determined by the court to be entitled to comity in this state, provided that in such case, the court shall determine whether such person is entitled to consent to the adoption pursuant to section 111 of this article or is solely entitled to notice pursuant to this section.

§3. Subdivisions 1 and 2 of section 384-c of the social services law, as amended by chapter 575 of the laws of 1980, are amended to read as follows:

1. Notwithstanding any inconsistent provision of this or any other law, and in addition to the notice requirements of any law pertaining to persons other than those specified in subdivision two of this section, notice as provided herein shall be given to the persons specified in subdivision two of this section of any [proceeding initiated pursuant to sections three hundred fifty-eight-a, three hundred eighty-four, and three hundred eighty-four-b of this chapter,] petition

to terminate parental rights, application to execute a judicial surrender, petition for approval of an extra-judicial surrender or extra-judicial consent to adoption involving [a] the child if the child was born out-of-wedlock. Persons specified in subdivision two of this section shall not include any person who has been convicted of rape in the first degree involving forcible compulsion, under subdivision one of section 130.35 of the penal law, when the child who is the subject of the proceeding was conceived as a result of such rape.

2. Persons entitled to notice, pursuant to subdivision one of this section, shall include:

(a) [any person adjudicated by a court in this state to be the father of the child;

(b) any person adjudicated by a court of another state or territory of the United States to be the father of the child, when a certified copy of the court order has been filed with the putative father registry, pursuant to section three hundred seventy-two-c of the social services law;

(c) any person who has timely filed an unrevoked notice of intent to claim paternity of the child, pursuant to section three hundred seventy-two-c of the social services law;

[(d) any person who is recorded on the child's birth certificate as the child's father;

(e) (b) any person who is openly living with the child and the child's mother at the time the proceeding is initiated and who is holding himself out to be the child's father;

[(f) (c) any person who has been identified as the child's father by the mother in written, sworn statement;

[(g) (d) any person who was married to the child's mother within six months subsequent to the birth of the child and prior to the execution of a surrender instrument or the initiation of a proceeding pursuant to section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law; [and

(h) any person who has filed with the putative father registry an instrument acknowledging paternity of the child, pursuant to section 4-1.2 of the estates, powers and trusts law] (e) any person who, subsequent to the child's most recent entry into foster care, has filed and served a custody petition upon the agency having care and custody of the child and who appeared in court on that petition on the date for return of process; and

(f) any person identified as the father in an order of paternity or filiation or an acknowledgment of paternity in another country that has been determined by the court to be entitled

to comity in this state, provided that in such case, the court shall determine whether such person is entitled to consent to the adoption pursuant to section 111 of the domestic relations law or is solely entitled to notice pursuant to this section and section 111-a of the domestic relations law.

§4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law and shall apply to petitions for adoption, termination of parental rights, approvals of extra-judicial surrenders or extra-judicial consents to adoption or applications to execute judicial surrenders filed on or after such effective date; provided, however, that this law shall not apply to cases in which judicial determinations had been made prior to such effective date regarding putative fathers entitled to consent to adopt or to notice of adoption, termination of parental rights, approvals of extra-judicial surrenders or extra-judicial consents to adoption or applications to execute judicial surrenders.

5. Child protective proceedings regarding destitute children
(F.C.A. §§115 (c), 1012(f), 1013(a), 1016, 1021, 1051, 1059)

Prior to enactment of the landmark permanency legislation in 2005,⁶⁵ proceedings to initiate and review the placement of destitute children in foster care were commenced by petitions pursuant to Social Services Law §392. The repeal of that statute left destitute children without any procedural vehicle for placement into foster care, where necessary, and for periodic review of that placement. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee proposes that a new no-fault cause of action be created in Article 10 of the Family Court Act to be utilized as that vehicle. Recognizing that, as the definition of “destitute child” in Social Services Law §371 specifies, this condition arises through no fault of the parents – *i.e.*, where there are no parents who can be held financially responsible for the child’s support – the proposal would specify “destitute” child as a category of child in need of protection as distinct from “abused” or “neglected” child. In so doing, the proposal would provide the procedural vehicle for fulfilling the New York State Constitutional mandate to provide care and assistance to the needy. *See* N.Y. Constitution, Art. XVII.

That destitute children currently fall into a procedural void is clear from the recent case of Matter of Nurayah J., 41 A.D.3d 477 (2d Dept., 2007), *lve. app. denied*, 9 N.Y.3d 907 (2007). In that case, a mother, who was herself a foster child, was charged with neglect of her baby. The Appellate Division, Second Department, found that the Family Court properly dismissed the neglect charge as without merit, but held the county responsible for caring for the baby as a destitute child under sections 371 and 398 of the Social Services Law. However, neither of those provisions delineate any court process for approving and periodically reviewing a placement made of such a child. Thus, although the county is responsible, the Family Court has no means of ensuring that appropriate plans are made for the child either to be reunified with parents, cared for by relatives, placed for adoption or provided with transitional or independent living services. Similarly, in Matter of Lawrence Children, 1 Misc.3d 156 (Fam. Ct., Kings Co., 2003), while allowing a neglect case against a mother who was herself in foster care to proceed, the Family Court suggested that the child protective agency assess whether it could simply assume care of the children in light of their destitute status. Social Services Law §398(1), in fact, places a responsibility upon local social services commissioners to “assume charge of and provide support for any destitute child who cannot be properly cared for in his [or her] home,” but provides no procedural vehicle for doing so. The Committee’s proposal would fill that statutory gap.

The proposal would establish “destitute child,” as the term is defined in section 371 of the Social Services Law, as a discrete category of child protective proceeding, with the attendant due process protections for parents and children that apply in all proceedings brought under Article 10 of the Family Court Act and with the social services, casework and permanency planning applicable to those proceedings. It would specifically authorize temporary placements upon the parents’ consent, pursuant to Family Court Act §1021, as well as each of the dispositional alternatives available in Family Court Act §1052. Family Court Act §1051 would be amended to include a discrete finding that a child is “destitute,” as distinct from “abused” or “neglected.” Where a destitute child is placed, pursuant to Family Court Act §1055, the placement would be reviewed, as

⁶⁵ Laws of 2005, ch. 3.

are all other placements, through permanency hearings under Article 10-A of the Family Court Act and the child and family would have all of the rights to services and planning applicable under the permanency statute. Similar amendments would be made to section 398 of the Social Services Law to delineate the responsibility of local social services departments to provide care and support for destitute children and, in appropriate cases, to petition the Family Court.

Finally, the proposal would repeal Family Court Act §1059, as it is anachronistic and conflicts with more recent legislation regarding abandoned children. That section provides that children found to be abandoned are to be “discharged” to the custody of the local commissioner of social services, who must care for them as “destitute” children or “as otherwise provided by law” and requires the Family Court to direct the local commissioner to institute proceedings to terminate parental rights. The term “discharged” appears misplaced in this context, since all of the dispositions enumerated in Family Court Act §1052(a) are available for children found to be abandoned under the definition in Family Court Act §1012(f)(ii); these include “placement” pursuant to Family Court Act §1055, but not “discharge to” the local commissioner of social services. Moreover, Family Court Act §1055(b)(ii) contains specific provisions regarding notices, diligent searches and termination of parental rights proceedings regarding abandoned children under one year old, and Social Services Law §384-b(5) defines abandonment for the purposes of termination of parental rights. However, contrary to the language in Family Court Act §1059, termination of parental rights proceedings should not be mandatory either for abandoned or destitute children, as alternatives, including provision of preventive services or placements with relatives or other suitable persons, may well be more appropriate to the children’s best interests in particular cases. Thus, section 1059 of the Family Court Act should be repealed.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the social services law, in relation to destitute children in child protective and permanency proceedings in the family court

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision (c) of section 115 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

(c) The family court has such other jurisdiction as is provided by law, including₂ but not limited to: proceedings concerning adoption and custody of children, as set forth in parts two and three of article six of this act; proceedings concerning the uniform interstate family support act, as set forth in article five-B of this act; proceedings concerning children in foster care and care and custody of children, as set forth in sections three hundred fifty-eight-a and three hundred eighty-four-a of the social services law and article ten-A of this act; proceedings concerning destitute

children, as set forth in articles ten and ten-a of this act; proceedings concerning guardianship and custody of children by reason of the death of, or abandonment or surrender by, the parent or parents, as set forth in sections three hundred eighty-three-c, three hundred eighty-four and paragraphs (a) and (b) of subdivision four of section three hundred eighty-four-b of the social services law; proceedings concerning standby guardianship and guardianship of the person as set forth in part four of article six of this act and article seventeen of the surrogate's court procedure act; and proceedings concerning the interstate compact on juveniles as set forth in chapter one hundred fifty-five of the laws of nineteen hundred fifty-five, as amended, the interstate compact on the placement of children, as set forth in section three hundred seventy-four-a of the social services law, and the uniform child custody jurisdiction and enforcement act, as set forth in article five-A of the domestic relations law.

§2. Subdivision (f) of section 1012 of the family court act, is amended to add a new paragraph (iii) to read as follows:

(iii) who is destitute, as defined in subdivision three of section three hundred seventy-one of the social services law.

§3. Subdivision (a) of section 1013 of the family court act, as added by chapter 962 of the laws of 1970, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The family court has exclusive original jurisdiction over proceedings under this article alleging [the abuse or neglect of] that a child is abused, neglected or destitute.

§4. The opening paragraph of section 1016 of the family court act, as added by chapter 319 of the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

§1016. Appointment of [law guardian] attorney for the child. The court shall appoint [a law guardian] an attorney to represent a child who has been allegedly abused or neglected or is alleged to be destitute upon the earliest occurrence of any of the following: (i) the court receiving notice, pursuant to paragraph (iv) of subdivision (b) of section [ten hundred] one thousand twenty-four of this act, of the emergency removal of the child; (ii) an application for an order for removal of the child prior to the filing of a petition, pursuant to section one thousand twenty-two of this act; or (iii) the filing of a petition alleging [abuse or neglect] that the child is abused, neglected or destitute pursuant to this article.

§5. Section 1021 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 3 of the laws of 2005, is

amended to read as follows:

§1021. Temporary removal with consent. A peace officer, acting pursuant to his or her special duties, or a police officer or an agent of a duly authorized agency, association, society or institution may temporarily remove a child from the place where he or she is residing with the written consent of his or her parent or other person legally responsible for his or her care, if the child is suspected to be an abused [or], neglected or destitute child under this article. The officer or agent shall, coincident with consent or removal, give written notice to the parent or other person legally responsible for the child's care of the right to apply to the family court for the return of the child pursuant to section one thousand twenty-eight of this article, and of the right to be represented by counsel and the procedures for those who are indigent to obtain counsel in proceedings brought pursuant to this article. Such notice shall also include the name, title, organization, address and telephone number of the person removing the child; the name, address and telephone number of the authorized agency to which the child will be taken, if available; and the telephone number of the person to be contacted for visits with the child. A copy of the instrument whereby the parent or legally responsible person has given such consent to such removal shall be appended to the petition alleging [abuse or neglect of] that the removed child is abused, neglected or destitute and made a part of the permanent court record of the proceeding. A copy of such instrument and notice of the telephone number of the child protective agency to contact to ascertain the date, time and place of the filing of the petition and of the hearing that will be held pursuant to section one thousand twenty-seven of this article shall be given to the parent or legally responsible person. Unless the child is returned sooner, a petition shall be filed within three court days from the date of removal. In such a case, a hearing shall be held no later than the next court day after the petition is filed and findings shall be made as required pursuant to section one thousand twenty-seven of this article.

§6. Subdivision (a) of section 1051 of the family court act, as added by chapter 962 of the laws of 1970, is amended to read as follows:

(a) If facts sufficient to sustain the petition are established in accord with part four of this article, or if all parties and the [law guardian] attorney for the child consent, the court shall, subject to the provisions of subdivision (c) of this section, enter an order finding that the child is an abused child [or], a neglected child or a destitute child and shall state the grounds for the finding.

§7. Subdivision (c) of section 1051 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 187 of

the laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:

(c) If facts sufficient to sustain the petition under this article are not established or if, in the case of a child alleged [neglect] to be neglected or destitute, the court concludes that its aid is not required on the record before it, the court shall dismiss the petition and shall state on the record the grounds for its dismissal.

§8. Subdivision (d) of section 1051 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 478 of the laws of 1988, is amended to read as follows:

(d) If the court makes a finding [of abuse or neglect] that a child has been abused or neglected or is destitute, it shall determine, based upon the facts adduced during the fact-finding hearing and any other additional facts presented to it, whether a preliminary order pursuant to section one thousand twenty-seven is required to protect the child's interests pending a final order of disposition. The court shall state the grounds for its determination. In addition, a child found to be abused [or], neglected or destitute may be removed and remanded to a place approved for such purpose by the local social service department or be placed in the custody of a suitable person, pending a final order of disposition, if the court finds that there is a substantial probability that the final order of disposition will be an order of placement under section one thousand fifty-five of this article. In determining whether substantial probability exists, the court shall consider the requirements of subdivision (b) of section one thousand fifty-two of this article.

§9. Section 1059 of the family court act is REPEALED.

§10. Subdivision 1 of section 398 of the social services law is amended to read as follows:

1. As to destitute children: Assume charge of and provide care and support for any destitute child who cannot be properly cared for in his or her home, as provided in subdivision two of this section and as ordered by the family court pursuant to articles ten and ten-a of the family court act.

§ 11. The opening paragraph and paragraph (a) of subdivision 2 of section 398 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 880 of the laws of 1976, are amended to read as follows:

As to neglected, abused, [or] abandoned or destitute children:

(a) Investigate [~~the~~] any alleged neglect, abuse, destitution or abandonment of a child, offer protective social services to prevent injury to the child, to safeguard his or her welfare[.]

and to preserve and stabilize family life wherever possible, and, if necessary, [bring the case before] promptly petition the family court for adjudication and care for the child [until the court acts in the matter and, in the case of an abandoned child, shall promptly petition the family court to obtain custody of such child].

§ 12. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 2 of section 398 of the social services law, as amended by chapter 555 of the laws of 1978, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Receive and care for any child alleged to be neglected, abused [or], abandoned or destitute, who is temporarily placed in [his] the care of the local commissioner by the family court pending adjudication by such court of the alleged neglect, abuse [or], abandonment or finding that the child is a destitute child, including the authority to establish, operate, maintain and approve facilities for such purpose in accordance with the regulations of the [department] office of children and family services; and receive and care for any neglected, abused [or], abandoned or destitute child placed [or discharged to his] in the care of the local commissioner by the family court.

§13. This act shall take effect immediately.

REPEAL NOTE: Section 1059, proposed to be repealed by this act, provides that children found to be abandoned are to be discharged to the custody of the local commissioner of social services, who shall care for them as destitute children and institute proceedings to terminate parental rights.

6. Orders of protection to protect designated witnesses in juvenile delinquency cases
(F.C.A. §352.3(1))

In 1998, sections 530.12 and 530.13 of the Criminal Procedure Law were amended to authorize orders of protection to be issued to protect designated witnesses in criminal proceedings. However, no comparable provision was added to the juvenile delinquency article of the Family Court Act. Without an explicit provision or incorporation by reference of the criminal provision, it is inapplicable to juvenile delinquency proceedings, even though those cases are quasi-criminal in nature and may involve similar needs to protect witnesses. *See* Family Court Act §303.1(1).

Without an explicit provision authorizing an order of protection to protect witnesses, the Family Court is constrained only to protect the complainant, producing an anomalous result not at all justified by any differences between the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Family Court Act §303.1(1) prohibits application of the Criminal Procedure Law unless “specifically prescribed” by the Family Court Act. To provide that specific authorization, the Committee is, therefore, proposing an amendment to Section 352.3 that is identical to the language protecting designated witnesses in criminal proceedings pursuant to Criminal Procedure Law §§530.12 and 530.13.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to orders of protection in juvenile delinquency proceedings

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision 1 of section 352.3 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 532 of the laws of 2008, is amended to read as follows:

(1) Upon the issuance of an order pursuant to section 315.3 or the entry of an order of disposition pursuant to section 352.2, a court may enter an order of protection against any respondent for good cause shown. The order may require that the respondent: (a) stay away from the home, school, business or place of employment of the victims of, or designated witnesses to, the alleged offense as shall be specifically named by the court in its order; or (b) refrain from harassing, intimidating, threatening or otherwise interfering with the victim or victims of, or designated witnesses to, the alleged offense and such members of the family or household of such victim or victims or of designated witnesses as shall be specifically named by the court in its order; or (c) refrain from intentionally injuring or killing, without justification, any companion animal the respondent knows to be owned, possessed, leased, kept or held by the person protected by the order or a minor child residing in such person’s household. “Companion animal”, as used in this

subdivision, shall have the same meaning as in subdivision five of section three hundred fifty of the agriculture and markets law.

§2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

7. Requirements for notices of indicated maltreatment reports and changes in foster care placements in child protective and voluntary foster care proceedings (F.C.A. §§1055, 1089; S.S.L. §§358-a)

Reflecting a pronounced legislative trend at both Federal and State levels, the ongoing oversight responsibility of the Family Court with respect to children in foster care has increased sharply in the past few years, culminating in the passage of the Federal *Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997* [Public Law 105-89], its state implementing legislation [Laws of 1999, ch. 7] and the landmark permanency law [Laws of 2005, ch. 3]. Both the Federal and State *Adoption and Safe Families Acts* emphasize that the safety of the child is paramount, compelling the conclusion that the Court and parties must be informed on a timely basis of all events affecting child safety, especially indicated reports of abuse or maltreatment.

Equally as important, the Federal *ASFA* measures success in terms of outcomes, *i.e.*, the States' ability to reach Federally-established targets for timely achievement of permanency for children. The first "Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)," conducted by the Administration for Children and Families of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), concluded that New York State, with among the lowest scores in the nation, demonstrated how far New York State has to go to achieving the Federal targets.⁶⁶ The second CFSR, which occurred in Spring, 2008, after the conclusion of the implementation by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services of its "Program Improvement Plan," unfortunately reflected only incremental improvement. Legislative action is thus compelled in order to ensure that the Family Courts can exercise their important monitoring functions on the basis of complete, timely information. The 2005 permanency legislation, with its salutary provisions for continuing jurisdiction, was an important step, but further legislation is necessary to ensure that information regarding the most compelling of circumstances is conveyed to the Court, the child's attorney and the parties on a timely basis. The Committee's proposal to require prompt notice of indicated reports of child abuse or maltreatment and of changes in children's placements is a critically-needed next step in the effort to bring New York State into compliance with ASFA.

In few areas of the Court's functioning is its continuing jurisdiction as critical as in child welfare, where complex decisions regarding children must be adjusted to the dynamic of their constantly changing needs and circumstances. The Federal and State statutes emphasize that safety of the child must be deemed the paramount consideration and that timely achievement of permanence must be the central goal. Not only are these matters of statutory imperative, but they are also determinative of New York State's eligibility for several hundred million dollars of annual Federal foster care aid. Prompt receipt by the Court, the parties and attorneys for children of information regarding the child's ever-changing circumstances, both as to any child maltreatment suffered by the child and as to changes in the child's placement, is vital to the effective exercise of the Family Court's continuing jurisdiction and is a critical component of New York State's ability to comply

⁶⁶ New York achieved reunification within one year of only 54.2% of the children in foster care in Fiscal Year 1999, compared to the national target of 76.2%. Even more serious, only 3% of the adoptions in New York State in Fiscal Year 1999 were finalized within two years of the children's placement into foster care, compared to the national target of 34%. See *Final Report of the Child and Family Services Review of New York State: Executive Summary*, p. 2 (2002)(available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwrp/executive/ny/html>) .

with the ASFA funding eligibility mandates.

Recognizing that “time is of the essence” where children are concerned, the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is submitting an expanded version of its earlier proposal to assure that the Family Court, the parties and children’s attorneys are informed promptly of any changes in placement that may warrant Court intervention. The proposal would amend sections 1055 and 1089 of the Family Court Act , as well as section 358-a of the Social Services Law, to require an agency with which a child has been placed, either voluntarily or as a result of an abuse or neglect finding, or to whom guardianship and custody has been transferred as a result of the child being freed for adoption, to report to the Court, the parties and the attorney for the child within 30 days of any change in the child’s placement status and within five days of the date that any report of abuse or maltreatment is found to be indicated. The two types of reports, in fact, are related, as the existence of an indicated report of maltreatment may bear directly upon the suitability of a planned status change.⁶⁷

Changes in placement covered by the notification requirement would include, but not be limited to, cases in which the child has been moved from the foster or pre-adoptive home or program into which he or she has been placed, cases in which the foster or pre-adoptive parents move out of state with the child and, with respect to children not freed for adoption, cases in which a trial or final discharge of the child from foster care has been made. The report of a change in placement must provide enough information for the litigants and the Family Court to assess whether further judicial intervention may be warranted. It must state the reasons for the change, as well as the grounds for the agency’s conclusion that the change is in the best interests of the child. This notification requirement does not contemplate court action in every case; nor does it interfere with the discretion of social services agencies to make necessary changes. However, acknowledging that this after-the-fact reporting may, in fact, be less than what may be called for in particular cases, the proposal includes a caveat that it is not intended to limit the current discretion of the Family Court to condition changes in placement, including trial and final discharges, upon prior notice to the Court, the parties and child’s attorney.⁶⁸

Both the Adoption and Safe Families Act and recent permanency legislation increased the frequency of judicial reviews of children in foster care, thus minimizing the problem of stale information. However, the ability of the Family Court and of the litigants to respond effectively is seriously impeded – and harm to children may be compounded – if information regarding significant changes in status of the children, and, importantly, indicated reports of neglect or abuse of the children, is not conveyed to the Court or parties until the next permanency hearing, often a delay of several months. This proposal will facilitate timely, informed responses to changes in children’s placements and incidents of maltreatment, thus prompting more expeditious and effective resolution of their cases.

⁶⁷ A recent unreported case in which an agency sought to finalize an adoption without disclosing a serious, founded abuse report illustrates this point.

⁶⁸ In one unreported case, for example, children who had already experienced the trauma of frequent moves were again transferred, notwithstanding both a prior stipulation by the agency not to move the children without a prior court order and a specific denial by the Court of the agency’s application for permission to move the children prior to the return date of its Order to Show Cause requesting authorization for the transfer. Unfortunately for the children involved, this case was by no means unique.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the social services law, in relation to notice of indicated reports of child maltreatment and changes of placement in child protective and voluntary foster care placement and review proceedings

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 1055 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision (j) to read as follows:

(j) Where a child is placed in the custody of the local commissioner of social services pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section, the court shall require a report of any change in placement within thirty days of such change in any case in which the child is moved from the foster home or program in which he or she is residing or in which the foster parents move out of state with the child. Each report shall state the reasons for such change, as well as the grounds for the commissioner's conclusion that such change is in the best interests of the child. Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the court to order that no change in placement may be made, except in an emergency posing an imminent risk to the child, without prior notice to the court, the parties and the child's attorney. A report shall also be required to be submitted to the court, the parties and the attorney for the child of any indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment in which the child or another child residing in the same home is the subject within five days of the indication of the report; provided, however, that where the indicated report concerns a child in a foster boarding or prospective adoptive home, the agency may redact the address of the home.

§2. Subparagraph (vii) of paragraph 2 of subdivision (d) of section 1089 of the family court act is amended by adding a new clause (H) to read as follows:

(H) a direction that the social services official or authorized agency charged with care and custody or guardianship and custody of the child, as applicable, shall report any change in placement within thirty days of such change in any case in which the child is moved from the foster home, relative's or other suitable person's home or program into which he or she has been placed or in which the foster parents or relatives or other suitable persons with whom the child is placed move out of state with the child. Each report shall state the reasons for such change, as well as the grounds

for the official's or agency's conclusion that such change is in the best interests of the child. Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the court to order that no change in placement may be made, except in an emergency posing an imminent risk to the child, without prior notice to the court, the parties and the child's attorney. A report shall also be required to be submitted to the court, the parties and the attorney for the child of any indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment where the child or another child in the same home is the subject within five days of the indication of the report; provided, however, that where the indicated report concerns a child in a foster boarding or prospective adoptive home, the agency may redact the address of the home.

§3. Subdivision 3 of section 358-a of the social services law is amended by adding a new paragraph (g) to read as follows:

(g) In any order issued pursuant to this section, the court may require the social services official or authorized agency charged with custody of the child to report any change in placement within thirty days of such change in any case in which the child is moved from the foster home or program into which he or she has been placed or in which the foster parents move out of state with the child. Each report shall state the reasons for such change, as well as the grounds for the official's or agency's conclusion that such change is in the best interests of the child. Nothing in this section shall limit the authority of the court to order that no change in placement may be made, except in an emergency posing an imminent risk to the child, without prior notice to the court, the parties and the child's attorney. A report shall also be required to be submitted to the court, the parties and the child's attorney of any indicated report of child abuse or maltreatment where the child or another child in the same home is the subject within five days of the indication of the report; provided, however, that where the indicated report concerns a child in a foster boarding or prospective adoptive home, the agency may redact the address of the home.

§4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.

8. Procedures for violations of adjournments in contemplation of dismissal, probation, placements and conditional discharges in juvenile delinquency cases and procedures for allocutions and for violations of probation and suspended judgments in persons in need of supervision cases
(F.C.A. §§315.3, 353.3, 360.2, 743, 776, 779, 779-a)

Significant gaps exist in the procedural framework governing juvenile delinquency and persons in need of supervision (PINS) cases, each in the area of violations of court orders. Further, a procedural gap is evident in the PINS statutory framework, as has repeatedly been identified by appellate courts. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing legislation to eliminate these gaps by clarifying applicable procedures in cases of alleged violations of adjournments in contemplation of dismissal (ACD's), orders of probation, orders of placement and orders of conditional discharge in juvenile delinquency proceedings and with respect to allocutions for admissions and violations of suspended judgments and orders of probation in PINS cases.

First, Article 3 of the Family Court Act is silent as to the procedures to be followed and the threshold showing required to establish a violation of the conditions of an ACD sufficient to restore the case to the calendar. It is likewise silent regarding whether an ACD violation should trigger either a fact-finding or dispositional hearing. Subdivision one of section 315.3 of the Family Court Act simply provides that "[u]pon *ex parte* motion by the presentment agency, or upon the court's own motion, made at the time the order is issued or at any time during its duration, the Family Court may restore the matter to the calendar."

In Matter of Edwin L., 88 N.Y.2d 593 (1996), the Court of Appeals declined to incorporate a specific hearing requirement for violations of conditions in cases adjourned in contemplation of dismissal into Article 3 of the Family Court Act in the absence of explicit legislation. The Court stated:

We hold that the requirements of due process are satisfied when a Family Court determines, after conducting an inquiry into the allegations of the violation petition, and providing the juvenile with an opportunity to respond to those allegations, that there is a legitimate basis for concluding that the juvenile has violated a condition of an ACD order and states the reasons, on the record, for reaching that determination.

8 N.Y.2d, at 603. Noting that the scope of the hearing will vary according to the circumstances of particular cases, the Court left a determination of the degree of formality required to the discretion of the Family Court. It did, however, assume, in the absence of statutory guidance, that a violation petition would be filed, providing notice to the juvenile of the violation, that the juvenile would be given an opportunity to respond to the petition with or without a hearing, and that hearsay evidence would be admissible to establish the allegations of the petition.

The Committee's proposal codifies these elements of the holding in Matter of Edwin L. and provides needed amplification of the applicable procedures. The proposal requires a verified petition, which must be served on the respondent juvenile, for restoration to the calendar of a juvenile delinquency

matter adjourned in contemplation of dismissal and provides the respondent with an opportunity to respond to the motion. Filling a gap in the Family Court Act, the proposal authorizes the Family Court to order that the respondent juvenile be detained and provides for an expedited determination of the violation petition in such cases, consistent with the criteria and time frames applicable in other detention cases. Consistent with Matter of R.D., 13 Misc.3d 1224(A) (Fam. Ct., Nassau Co., 2006)(Unreported Opinion), the proposal codifies the direction in Matter of Edwin L. that hearsay evidence should be admissible.⁶⁹ If the petition to restore the matter to the calendar is sustained, the case would be set down for a fact-finding or dispositional hearing, depending upon whether the matter had been adjourned in contemplation of dismissal before or after entry of a fact-finding order. Similar to the provision regarding probation violations [Family Court Act §§360.2(4), (5)], the proposal further provides that the period of the ACD would be tolled during the pendency of the petition, and that, if the petition to restore the matter to the calendar is dismissed, the period during which the petition was pending would be credited to the period of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal.

Second, the proposal remedies the failure of the provisions regarding violations of orders of probation to specify the type of support for the violation petition allegations. Because the violations often concern a juvenile's compliance or lack of compliance with orders to cooperate with particular programs, it should be possible for probation violation petitions to be based upon allegations supported by letters, reports and other documents from the programs in question.⁷⁰ The proposal thus specifies that petition allegations may include hearsay, although the current requirement for the evidence of proof of the petition to be relevant, material and competent would be retained.

Third, the Committee's proposal effectuates the apparent intention of the Legislature to provide identical provisions to toll orders of probation and conditional discharge while violation proceedings are pending. While sections 360.2 and 360.3 articulate a procedure governing violations of both probation and conditional discharge, references to conditional discharge appear to have been inadvertently omitted from two subdivisions of those sections. In Matter of Donald MM, 231 A.D.2d 810, 647 N.Y.S. 2d 312 (3rd Dept., 1996), *lve. app. denied*, 89 N.Y.2d 804 (1996), the Appellate Division, Third Department, read into section 360.2(4) of the Family Court Act a requirement that the period of a conditional discharge be tolled during the pendency of a violation petition, as in probation violation cases. The Court held that the omission of the requirement was unintentional, as "it is apparent from a reading of all provisions of this statute that the Legislature did not intend for probationary periods and conditional discharges to be treated differently." The Committee's proposal incorporates this tolling requirement into subdivision four of section 360.2 of the Family Court Act. Using the same rationale, it remedies a similar gap in subdivision five of the same section, which requires credit for the period of pendency of a violation petition to be given in cases in which the violation has not been sustained.

Fourth, the proposal remedies an anomaly in the juvenile delinquency placement statute. While

⁶⁹ In light of the Governor's veto of this proposal in 1999, it was revised to delete reference to a specific burden of proof.

⁷⁰ Legislation is needed in light of appellate decisions applying juvenile delinquency pleading requirements for non-hearsay allegations to probation violation petitions. See Matter of Markim Q, 22 A.D.3d 498 (2d Dept., 2005); Matter of Whitney Z., 12 A.D.3d 971 (3d Dept., 2004); Matter of Todd D., 288 A.D.2d 740 (3d Dept., 2001).

a placement with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services is tolled when a child is absent without leave and a warrant is outstanding [Exec. Law §510-b(7)], no comparable provision exists with respect to a placement of a child with a county Department of Social Services. Placements with DSS are often for the very same facilities as those with NYS OCFS – residential treatment facilities operated by authorized agencies under contract. Disparate treatment of placed delinquent youth should not arise out of the happenstance of who the agency contracts with for payment of the child’s placement. The Committee’s proposal, therefore, would incorporate Executive Law §510-b(7) into Article 3 of the Family Court Act and would apply it both to placements with local Departments of Social Services and with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

With respect to PINS proceedings, the Committee's proposal adds a new section 743 to the Family Court Act, establishing a judicial allocation procedure for accepting admissions in PINS cases analogous to the allocation required in juvenile delinquency cases [Family Court Act §321.3]. The Committee's proposal would require the Family Court, before accepting an admission in a PINS case, to ascertain that the juvenile respondent committed the act or acts to which an admission is being entered, is voluntarily waiving his or her right to a hearing and is aware of the dispositional alternatives that may be ordered as a result of the adjudication that is the likely consequence of the admission.

The absence of an explicit allocation procedure in the PINS statute has generated extensive appellate litigation. In Matter of Tabitha L.L., 87 N.Y.2d 1009 (1996), the Court of Appeals held that it would be inappropriate to incorporate section 321.3 of the Family Court Act into Article 7 in the absence of specific legislative authorization. It did not determine whether an allocation procedure is constitutionally required, since that issue was not preserved for appellate review. In a subsequent case, Matter of Tabitha E., 271 A.D.2d 719, 720 (3rd Dept., 2000), however, the Appellate Division, Third Department, held it to be reversible error for the Family Court to accept an admission in a PINS proceeding without first advising the respondent of her right to remain silent. *Accord*, Matter of Ashley R., 42 A.D.3d 689 (3d Dept., 2007); Matter of Marquis S., 26 A.D.3d 757 (4th Dept., 2006); Matter of Steven Z., 19 A.D.3d 783 (3d Dept., 2005); Matter of Matthew RR, 9 A.D.3d 514 (3d Dept., 2004); Matter of Nichole A., 300 A.D.2d 947 (3rd Dept., 2002); Matter of Jodi VV., 295 A.D.2d 659 (3rd Dept., 2002); Matter of Shaun U., 288 A.D.2d 708 (3rd Dept., 2001). The Committee submits that considerations of due process -- equally compelling in PINS as in juvenile delinquency cases -- militate in favor of equivalent protections and, therefore, urges the Legislature to enact a provision for PINS cases comparable to the allocation requirement applicable to juvenile delinquency proceedings.

The final two amendments to the PINS statutes would delineate procedures for violations of orders of suspended judgment and violations of probation, drawing upon existing juvenile delinquency procedures. *See* Family Court Act §§360.2, 360.3. Violations of both orders of probation and suspended judgment would require the filing of a verified petition, a hearing at which the juvenile is represented by counsel and a determination by competent proof that the juvenile committed the violation charged without just cause. Periods of dispositions of suspended judgment and probation would be tolled during the pendency of the violation petition. The juvenile must be advised of his or her rights. *See, e.g.*, Matter of Jessica GG., 19 A.D.3d 765 (3d Dept., 2005); Matter of Ashley A., 296 A.D.2d 627 (3rd Dept., 2002).

Upon a finding of a violation, the Family Court would be authorized to adjourn the matter for

a new dispositional hearing in accordance with subdivision (b) or (c) of section 749 of the Family Court Act or, at minimum, provide the juvenile with an opportunity to present evidence. See Matter of Casey W., 3 A.D.3d 785 (3d Dept., 2004); Matter of Josiah RR, 277 A.D.2d 654 (3rd Dept., 2000). The Court would be permitted to revoke, continue or modify the order of probation or suspended judgment. If the order is revoked, the Court must order a different dispositional alternative enumerated in section 754(a), to state the reasons for its determination and to make the findings required by section 754(b) of the Family Court Act. See Matter of Nathaniel JJ, 265 A.D.2d 660 (3rd Dept., 1999), *after remittitur*, 270 A.D.2d 783 (3rd Dept., 2000) (PINS probation violation matter remanded twice for specific findings, first with respect to the reasons for the disposition and second as to the 16-year old respondent's needs, if any, for independent living services).⁷¹ In matters, such as Nathaniel J.J., in which the juvenile was placed pursuant to Family Court Act §756, these findings would be mandated as well by the Federal and State *Adoption and Safe Families Acts* [Public Law 105-89; Laws of 1999, ch.7; Laws of 2000, ch. 145].

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act, in relation to adjudication, dispositional and violation procedures in juvenile delinquency and persons in need of supervision cases

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Subdivision 1 of section 315.3 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 237 of the laws of 1991, is amended to read as follows:

1. Except where the petition alleges that the respondent has committed a designated felony act, the court may at any time prior to the entering of a finding under section 352.1 and with the consent of the respondent order that the proceeding be "adjourned in contemplation of dismissal." An adjournment in contemplation of dismissal is an adjournment of the proceeding, for a period not to exceed six months, with a view to ultimate dismissal of the petition in furtherance of justice. Upon issuing such an order, providing such terms and conditions as the court deems appropriate, the court must release the respondent. The court may, as a condition of an adjournment in contemplation of dismissal order, in cases where the record indicates that the consumption of alcohol may have been a contributing factor, require the respondent to attend and complete an alcohol awareness program established pursuant to [paragraph six-a of subdivision (a) of] section [19.07] 19.25 of the mental hygiene law. [Upon *ex parte* motion by the presentment agency, or upon the

⁷¹ The final appeal in Matter of Nathaniel JJ, 274 A.D.2d 611 (3rd Dept., 2000) was dismissed as moot, since the appellant had been released from placement.

court's own motion, made at the time the order is issued or at] At any time during [its] the duration of an order issued pursuant to this section, the court may restore the matter to the calendar in accordance with subdivision four of this section. If the proceeding is not restored, the petition is, at the expiration of the order, deemed to have been dismissed by the court in furtherance of justice.

§2. Section 315.3 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision 4 to read as follows:

4. An application to restore the matter to the calendar in accordance with subdivision one of this section shall be in the form of a verified petition which shall be served on the respondent, who shall have an opportunity to be heard with respect thereto. The petition shall state the factual basis for the restoration, including the condition or conditions alleged to have been violated and the time, place and manner in which such violation occurred. The respondent is entitled to counsel at all stages of a proceeding under this section, and the court shall advise the respondent of such right at the initial appearance on any petition filed hereunder. Upon request, the court shall grant a reasonable adjournment to the respondent in order to respond to the petition and, if the factual allegations of the petition are contested, to prepare for a hearing. If the court determines that the respondent should be detained in accordance with the criteria in subdivision three of section 320.5, the court shall hear and determine the petition within three days; provided, however, that for good cause shown, the court may adjourn the matter for not more than three additional days. If, after hearing the petition, the court finds that the presentment agency has demonstrated by relevant and material evidence that one or more conditions of the order have been violated, the court shall state on the record the reasons for such determination, grant the petition, restore the matter to the calendar and schedule the proceeding for a fact-finding hearing or dispositional hearing, as applicable. Upon filing the petition, the period of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal shall be interrupted. Such interruption shall continue until such time as the court determines the petition. If the court denies the petition, the period during which the petition was pending shall be credited to the period of the adjournment in contemplation of dismissal.

§3. Section 353.3 of the family court act is amended by adding a new subdivision 11 to read as follows:

11. Where the respondent is placed pursuant to subdivision two or three of this section and is absent from the facility or authorized agency without the consent of the director of the facility or

agency, the absence shall interrupt the calculation of time of such placement and such interruption shall continue until the child's return to the facility or agency; provided, however, that a timely permanency hearing shall be held for the respondent, notwithstanding such interruption. Any time spent in detention between the date of such absence without leave and the return of the child to the facility or agency shall be credited against the time of placement if the detention was due to a surrender or arrest due to the absence or if the detention was due to an arrest that did not culminate in a petition, adjudication or adjustment.

§4. Subdivisions 2, 4 and 5 of section 360.2 of the family court act, as added by chapter 920 of the laws of 1982, are amended to read as follows:

2. The petition must be verified and subscribed to by the probation service or the appropriate government agency. Such petitions must stipulate the condition or conditions of the order violated and a reasonable description of the time, place, and manner in which the violation occurred. Non-hearsay allegations or allegations made upon information and belief of the factual part of the petition or of any supporting deposition must establish, if true, every violation charged.

4. If a petition is filed under subdivision one, the period of probation as prescribed by section 353.2 or conditional discharge as prescribed by section 353.1 shall be interrupted as of the date of the filing of the petition. Such interruption shall continue until a final determination as to the petition has been made by the court pursuant to a hearing held in accordance with section 360.3 or until such time as the respondent reaches the maximum age of acceptance into a division for youth facility.

5. If the court determines that there was no violation of probation or conditional discharge by the respondent, the period of interruption shall be credited to the period of probation or conditional discharge, as applicable.

§5. The family court act is amended by adding a new section 743 to read as follows:

§743. Acceptance of an admission. (a) Before accepting an admission, the court shall advise the respondent of his or her right to a fact-finding hearing. The court shall also ascertain through allocution of the respondent and his or her parent or person legally responsible for his or her care, if present, that the respondent:

- (i) committed the act or acts to which an admission is being entered;
- (ii) is voluntarily waiving his or her right to a fact-finding hearing; and
- (iii) is aware of the possible specific dispositional orders.

The provisions of this subdivision shall not be waived.

(b) Upon acceptance of an admission, the court shall state the reasons for its determination and shall enter a fact-finding order. The court shall schedule a dispositional hearing in accordance with subdivision (b) or (c) of section seven hundred forty-nine of this article.

§6. Section 776 of the family court act, as added by chapter 686 of the laws of 1962, is amended to read as follows:

§776. Failure to comply with terms and conditions of suspended judgment. [If a] A respondent [is] brought before the court for failure to comply with reasonable terms and conditions of [a] an order of suspended judgment [issued under this article and if,] shall be dealt with in accordance with section seven hundred seventy-nine-a of this article. If, after a hearing pursuant to such section, the court [is satisfied] determines by competent proof that the respondent without just cause failed to comply with such terms and conditions, the court may adjourn the matter for a new dispositional hearing in accordance with subdivision (b) or (c) of section seven hundred forty-nine of this article. The court may revoke the [suspension] order of suspended judgment and proceed to make any order that might have been made at the time judgment was suspended.

§7. Section 779 of the family court act, as added by chapter 686 of the laws of 1962, is amended to read as follows:

§779. [Failure] Jurisdiction and supervision of respondent placed on probation; failure to comply with terms of probation. [If a] (a) A respondent who is placed on probation in accordance with section seven hundred fifty-seven of this article shall remain under the legal jurisdiction of the court pending expiration or termination of the period of probation.

(b) The probation service shall supervise the respondent during the period of such legal jurisdiction.

(c) A respondent [is] brought before the court for failure to comply with reasonable terms and conditions of an order of probation issued under section seven hundred fifty-seven of this article [and if,] shall be dealt with in accordance with section seven hundred seventy-nine-a of this article. If, after hearing pursuant to such section, the court [is satisfied] determines by competent proof that the respondent without just cause failed to comply with such terms and conditions, the court may adjourn the matter for a new dispositional hearing in accordance with subdivision (b) or (c) of section seven hundred forty-nine of this article. The court may revoke the order of probation and proceed to make any order that might have been made at the time the order of probation was

entered.

§8. Section 779-a of the family court act, as amended by chapter 309 of the laws of 1996, is amended to read as follows:

§779-a. [Declaration of delinquency concerning juvenile delinquents and persons in need of supervision.] Petition and hearing on violation of order of probation or suspended judgment. (a) If, at any time during the period of [a disposition of] probation or suspended judgment, the [court] petitioner, probation service or appropriate presentment agency has reasonable cause to believe that the respondent has violated a condition of the disposition, [it] the petitioner, probation service or appropriate presentment agency may [declare the respondent delinquent and] file a [written declaration of delinquency. Upon such filing, the respondent shall be declared delinquent of his disposition of probation and such disposition shall be tolled. The] violation petition.

(b) The petition must be verified and subscribed by the petitioner, probation service or the appropriate presentment agency. The petition must specify the condition or conditions of the order violated and a reasonable description of the date, time, place and manner in which the violation occurred. Non-hearsay allegations of the factual part of the petition or of any supporting depositions must establish, if true, every violation charged.

(c) Upon the filing of a violation petition, the court [then must promptly take reasonable and appropriate action] shall issue a summons or warrant in accordance with section seven hundred twenty-five of this article to cause the respondent to appear before [it for the purpose of enabling] the court [to make a final determination with respect to the alleged delinquency. The]. Where the respondent is on probation pursuant to section seven hundred fifty-seven of this article, the time for prompt court action shall not be construed against the probation service when the respondent has absconded from probation supervision and the respondent's whereabouts are unknown. The court must be notified promptly of the circumstances of any such probationers.

(d) If a petition is filed under subdivision (a) of this section, the period of probation or suspended judgment prescribed by section seven hundred fifty-five or seven hundred fifty-seven of this article shall be interrupted as of the date of the filing of the petition. Such interruption shall continue until a final determination of the petition or until such time as the respondent reaches the maximum age of acceptance into placement with the commissioner of social services. If the court dismisses the violation petition, the period of interruption shall be credited to the period of

probation or suspended judgment.

(e) Hearing on violation. (i) The court may not revoke an order of probation or suspended judgment unless the court has found by competent proof that the respondent has violated a condition of such order without just cause and that the respondent has had an opportunity to be heard. The respondent is entitled to a hearing promptly after a violation petition has been filed. The respondent is entitled to counsel at all stages of the proceeding and may not waive representation by counsel except as provided in section two hundred forty-nine-a of this act.

(ii) At the time of the respondent's first appearance following the filing of a violation petition, the court must:

(A) advise the respondent of the contents of the petition and furnish a copy to the respondent;

(B) advise the respondent that he or she is entitled to counsel at all stages of a proceeding under this section and appoint an attorney pursuant to section two hundred forty-nine of this act if independent legal representation is not available to the respondent. If practicable, the court shall appoint the same attorney who represented the respondent in the original proceedings under this article;

(C) determine whether the respondent should be released or detained pursuant to section 720 of this article; and

(D) ask the respondent whether he or she wishes to make any statement with respect to the violation. If the respondent makes a statement, the court may accept it and base its decision upon the statement. The provisions of section seven hundred forty-three shall apply in determining whether a statement should be accepted. If the court does not accept the statement or if the respondent does not make a statement, the court shall conduct a hearing.

(iii) Upon request, the court shall grant a reasonable adjournment to the respondent to prepare for the hearing.

(iv) At the hearing, the court may receive any relevant, competent and material evidence. The respondent may cross-examine witnesses and present evidence on his or her own behalf. The court's determination must be based upon competent evidence.

(v) At the conclusion of the hearing, the court may adjourn the matter for a new dispositional hearing in accordance with subdivision (b) or (c) of section seven hundred forty-nine of this article.

The court may revoke, continue or modify the order of probation or suspended judgment. If the court revokes the order, it shall order a different disposition pursuant to subdivision (a) of section seven hundred fifty-four of this article and shall make findings in accordance subdivision (b) of such section. If the court continues the order of probation or suspended judgment, it shall dismiss the petition of violation.

§9. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law and shall apply to orders of adjournment in contemplation of dismissal issued and petitions for violations of probation, conditional discharge and suspended judgment filed on or after such effective date.

9. Modification of orders of child support in Family Court and matrimonial proceedings (F.C.A. §§451, 461; D.R.L. §236B(9)(b))

Examination of the New York State statutory framework for child support reveals layers of enactments, a patchwork of provisions that do not cohere into an integrated, internally-consistent whole. The standards applicable to modifications of child support orders are examples of contradictory statutory layers that lead to disparate and sometimes unfair results for both parents and, importantly, their children. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee is proposing a measure to lessen the disparity and make more uniform the provisions regarding modifications of orders of child support in the Family Court Act and Domestic Relations Law.

The *Child Support Standards Act (CSSA)*, enacted in 1989, was designed to ensure that the children of New York are adequately supported and share fairly in the earnings and resources of their parents. The *CSSA* contains a formula-driven mechanism to accomplish this purpose, at least at the time of the initial child support determination. In the early 1990's, pursuant to Federal mandate, a "review and adjustment" procedure was added that required periodic adjustment of child support orders in cases involving families on public assistance or upon the request of custodial parents who had applied for child support collection and enforcement and/or paternity establishment services pursuant to section 111-g of the Social Services Law. Before the "review and adjustment" provisions were fully implemented, the Federal *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* was enacted, which, *inter alia*, gave states the option of replacing the "review and adjustment" provisions with an automatic "cost of living adjustment" ("COLA"). See 42 U.S.C. §666(a)(10)(A) [Public Law 104-193]. With the passage of its welfare reform legislation in 1997, New York State availed itself of this option, again making it applicable to custodial parents on public assistance and others who have requested child support and/or paternity services. See Social Services Law §111-n [Laws of 1997, ch. 398]. Orders issued prior to 1989 were made subject to a one-time "review and adjustment," after which all child support orders in public assistance and, upon request, in child support and paternity services cases were made subject to the "cost of living adjustment" every two years. The statute contained a procedure for challenging a COLA, which, when invoked by either party, would result in either issuance of a whole new order of support under the *CSSA* standards or an order declining the adjustment. See Family Court Act §413-a(3)(b); Domestic Relations Law §240-c(3)(b); Social Services Law §111-n(5).

These "review and adjustment" and "COLA" provisions, enacted to comply with the requirements of Title IV-D of the Federal *Social Security Act* [42 U.S.C.] for New York State's receipt of Federal IV-D funding, were superimposed upon a long-standing methodology for the modification of child support obligations, articulated in the Family Court Act and Domestic Relations Law and shaped by case law. A litigant not covered by these provisions is required to demonstrate an "unforeseen change in circumstances" as a prerequisite to a modification of a child support order – in essence, as a prerequisite to gaining access to the *CSSA* provisions if the original order had not been issued within those standards. See *Matter of Boden v. Boden*, 42 N.Y.2d 210, 213 (1977). In *Matter of Brescia v. Fitts*, 56 N.Y.2d 132, 139-40 (1982), the Court of Appeals further permitted modification based upon the child's right to adequate support. The recent COLA

provisions contain the caveat that “[n]othing herein shall be deemed in any way to limit, restrict, expand or impair the rights of any party to file for a modification of a child support order as is otherwise provided by law.” Family Court Act §413-a(4); Domestic Relations Law §240-c(4).

However, in reality, the provisions do just that – *i.e.*, litigants in public assistance and child support and paternity enforcement services cases may obtain a full review and a new *Child Support Standards Act* order without showing the change in circumstances that is required for all other litigants. As the Court of Appeals held, in Tompkins County Support Collection Unit on behalf of Linda S. Chamberlin v. Boyd M. Chamberlin, 99 N.Y.2d 328 (2003), a challenge to a COLA – an objection upon any ground – brings up the whole child support order for review, not simply the COLA itself: “Family Court did not err in entering an order in accordance with the *CSSA* guidelines rather than merely determining whether or not the COLA amount should be applied.” *Id.* at 337.

The Committee proposes to remedy this disparity by giving all litigants in child support matters the opportunity for periodic review of child support orders. All litigants would be accorded standing to apply for a modification without making the showing required by the Boden and Brescia cases by using either of two standards: the passage of three years or a 15% change in the gross income of either party.

This proposal would thus resolve the disparity between public and private child support cases in a clear and fair fashion. It would continue the COLA provisions for public assistance and child support enforcement cases, but would also provide objective criteria for children and their families in other cases to obtain necessary modifications under the *Child Support Standards Act*. This change would further the goals of broadening the reach of the *CSSA* to provide adequate support for more children and would, at the same time, be entirely consistent with the Federal child support mandates applicable to New York State.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the family court act and the domestic relations law, in relation to modification of child support orders

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 451 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 533 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

§451. Continuing jurisdiction. Except as provided in article five-B of this act, the court has continuing jurisdiction over any support proceeding brought under this article until its judgment is completely satisfied and may modify, set aside or vacate any order issued in the course of the proceeding, provided, however, that the modification, set aside or vacatur shall not reduce or annul

child support arrears accrued prior to the making of an application pursuant to this section. The court shall not reduce or annul any other arrears unless the defaulting party shows good cause for failure to make application for relief from the judgment or order directing payment prior to the accrual of the arrears, in which case the facts and circumstances constituting such good cause shall be set forth in a written memorandum of decision. A modification may increase support payments [nunc pro tunc as of] retroactively to the date of the initial application for support based on newly discovered evidence. Any retroactive amount of support due shall be paid in one lump sum or periodic sums, as the court directs, taking into account any amount of support which has been paid. Upon an application to modify, set aside or vacate an order of support, no hearing shall be required unless such application shall be supported by affidavit and other evidentiary material sufficient to establish a prima facie case for the relief requested.

An application to modify an order of support and to establish a new order of support in accordance with the child support standards as set forth in section four hundred thirteen of this article may be made either because : (i) the gross income of either party has changed in excess of fifteen percent since the order of support was entered, last modified or adjusted; or (ii) three years or more have elapsed since the order of support was entered, last modified or adjusted.

§2. Paragraph (ii) of subdivision (b) of section 461 of the family court act, as amended by chapter 28 of the laws of 1970, is amended to read as follows:

(ii) entertain an application to modify such order on the ground that [changed circumstances requires such modification] either the gross income of either party has changed in excess of fifteen percent since the order of support was entered, last modified or adjusted or three years or more have elapsed since the order of support was entered, last modified or adjusted in accordance with section four hundred fifty-one of this article, unless the order of the supreme court provides that the supreme court retains exclusive jurisdiction to enforce or modify the order.

§3. Paragraph b of subdivision 9 of part B of section 236 of the domestic relations law, as amended by chapter 354 of the laws of 1993, is amended to read as follows:

b. Upon application by either party, the court may annul or modify any prior order or judgment as to maintenance or child support, upon a showing of the recipient's inability to be self-supporting or a substantial change in circumstance or termination of child support awarded pursuant to section two hundred forty of this article, including financial hardship. Where, after the

effective date of this part, a separation agreement remains in force no modification of a prior order or judgment incorporating the terms of said agreement shall be made as to maintenance without a showing of extreme hardship on either party in which event the judgment or order as modified shall supersede the terms of the prior agreement and judgment for such period of time and under such circumstances as the court determines. [Provided] The court may, however, [that no] annul or modify a prior order of child support where either the gross income of either party has changed in excess of fifteen percent since the order of support was entered, last modified or adjusted or three years or more have elapsed since the order of support was entered, last modified or adjusted, No modification or annulment shall reduce or annul any arrears of child support which have accrued prior to the date of application to annul or modify any prior order or judgment as to child support. The court shall not reduce or annul any arrears of maintenance which have been reduced to final judgment pursuant to section two hundred forty-four of this chapter. No other arrears of maintenance which have accrued prior to the making of such application shall be subject to modification or annulment unless the defaulting party shows good cause for failure to make application for relief from the judgment or order directing such payment prior to the accrual of such arrears and the facts and circumstances constituting good cause are set forth in a written memorandum of decision. [Such] A modification may increase maintenance or child support [nunc pro tunc as of] retroactively to the date of application based on newly discovered evidence. Any retroactive amount of maintenance, or child support due shall, except as provided for herein, be paid in one sum or periodic sums, as the court directs, taking into account any temporary or partial payments which have been made. Any retroactive amount of child support due shall be support arrears/past due support. In addition, such retroactive child support shall be enforceable in any manner provided by law including, but not limited to, an execution for support enforcement pursuant to subdivision (b) of section fifty-two hundred forty-one of the civil practice law and rules. When a child receiving support is a public assistance recipient, or the order of support is being enforced or is to be enforced pursuant to section one hundred eleven-g of the social services law, the court shall establish the amount of retroactive child support and notify the parties that such amount shall be enforced by the support collection unit pursuant to an execution for support enforcement as provided for in subdivision (b) of section fifty-two hundred forty-one of the civil practice law and rules, or in such periodic payments as would have been authorized had such an execution been issued. In such case, the court shall not direct the

schedule of repayment of retroactive support. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to a separation agreement made prior to the effective date of this part.

§4. This action shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become law.

10. Compensation of guardians *ad litem* appointed for children and adults in civil proceedings out of public funds (CPLR §1204)

While attorneys for children assigned to represent children under Judiciary Law §35 or Family Court Act §249 are remunerated out of State funds, where independent means are not available, no analogous provision for compensation from public funds exists for guardians *ad litem* appointed for children and impaired adults in civil proceedings pursuant to section 1204 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules. The Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee, with the support of the Chief Administrative Judge's Advisory Committee on Civil Practice, is proposing a measure to redress that inequity.

There are a variety of situations in which children and adults may be deemed by judges to require the protection afforded by a guardian *ad litem*. For example, in Family Court, the respondent in a child protective proceeding (the parent of the child who is allegedly mistreated) may be under 18 years of age. Adults may require guardians *ad litem* when their own mental capacity is challenged, for instance, in termination of parental rights proceedings based on the parents' mental illness or retardation. Additionally, guardians *ad litem* are occasionally appointed in matrimonial proceedings in Supreme Court in lieu of an attorneys for a child.

While judges now have the authority to make these appointments, they are reluctant to do so because they cannot guarantee that the guardian *ad litem* will receive any payment. Section 1204 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules authorizes payment for the services of a guardian *ad litem* by "any other party or from any recovery had on behalf of the person whom such guardian represents or from such person's other property." Neither the Family Court Act nor the CPLR provide for payment where there is no monetary corpus from which payment can be made, and the courts have ruled that no public funds may be used in such circumstances. See Matter of Wood v. Cordello, 91 A.D. 2d 1178 (4th Dept. 1983). See also Matter of Baby Boy O., 298 A.D.2d 677 (3rd Dept., 2002)(County Commissioner of Social Services could not be ordered to pay for guardian *ad litem* as he was not a party). In Family Court proceedings, the parties are often indigent and thus unable to remunerate the guardian *ad litem*.

This proposal would authorize payment for the services of the guardian *ad litem* out of public funds, as a state charge, where the guardian served on behalf of a child, and as a county charge, if the guardian served on behalf of an adult, consistent with the present statutory sources of funding for assignment of attorneys for children and counsel for indigent adults. By virtue of section 165 of the Family Court Act, section 1204 of the CPLR, as amended, would apply to Family Court proceedings. In addition, if the proceeding is one in which there is a subsequent monetary recovery, the funds could to be recovered pursuant to section 1103 of the CPLR.

Proposal

AN ACT to amend the civil practice law and rules, in relation to compensation of guardians *ad litem*

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 1204 of the civil practice law and rules is amended to read as follows:

§1204. Compensation of guardian ad litem. A court may allow a guardian ad litem a reasonable compensation for [his] the guardian's services to be paid in whole or part by any other party or from any recovery had on behalf of the person whom such guardian represents or from such person's other property, or if there is no such source, compensation for services shall be from state funds appropriated to the judiciary in the same amounts established by subdivision three of section thirty-five of the judiciary law, if the guardian ad litem has been appointed for an infant, and out of county funds in the same amounts established by section seven hundred twenty-two-b of the county law, if appointed for an adult. No order allowing compensation shall be made except on an affidavit of the guardian or [his] the guardian's attorney showing the services rendered.

§2. This act shall take effect immediately.

IV. Future Matters:

Under the leadership of the Committee's co-chairs, Hon. Monica Drinane, Judge of the Family Court, Bronx County, and Peter Passidomo, Chief Clerk of the New York City Family Court, the Family Court Advisory and Rules Committee had a productive year in 2009. In addition to the legislative achievements noted in the Introduction, the Committee proposed and facilitated Family Court forum discussions at the summer judicial seminars regarding engagement of children in court proceedings. The Committee also spurred discussion among advocates and legislative staff regarding means of implementing the subsidized kinship guardianship and other provisions of the Federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351]. Finally, the Committee provided support for the initiative to reorganize and reform the handling of child protective proceedings in the New York City Family Court, in particular, with respect to enhancing compliance with court mandates.

Most important among its anticipated activities in 2010, the Committee will again actively support efforts by the Unified Court System to persuade the Legislature to meet the pressing need of the Family Court statewide for additional judges in order to fulfill the demands of its ever-increasing and ever-more complex workload. In addition to these efforts and to its involvement in proposing revisions to court rules and forms and to reviewing legislative and other proposals, the Committee's five subcommittees are expected to be actively engaged in the following projects, among others, during the coming year:

- Child Welfare: As a result of the 2008 summer seminar roundtables and comprehensive survey of practitioners, the Subcommittee will consider follow-up steps regarding engagement of youth in court proceedings, including further training and possible compilation of suggested practices or guidelines. The Subcommittee has commenced a project to explore the myriad issues presented by parents who are not named as respondents in child protective and related proceedings. It will also continue to explore means of implementing the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* [Public Law 110-351] and of ensuring timely, comprehensive adjudication and review of cases, particularly those involving children in out-of-home care. As in past years, the Subcommittee will work in conjunction with the New York State Judicial Institute on the development and presentation of judicial training programs in the child welfare area and further development of proposals to incorporate effective elements of "Model Court" initiatives into Family Court practice.

- Juvenile Justice: The Subcommittee will review the recommendations emanating from the report of the Governor's Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice and the Department of Justice investigation of facilities operated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and will continue its advocacy for greater support for Family Court probation and alternatives to detention and placement. Additionally, it will continue its efforts to stimulate dialogue on permanency planning in juvenile delinquency and Persons in Need of Supervision cases, particularly for youth with both child welfare and juvenile justice cases pending in the Family Courts, especially in terms of implementation of the *Adoption and Safe Families Act* permanency planning requirements regarding parental involvement, responsibilities and representation. Further, the Subcommittee will explore proposals regarding initiation and screening of juvenile offender

proceedings, as well as the age limit for juvenile delinquency jurisdiction.

- Child Support and Paternity: Building upon its initiative to have the Family Court's Universal Case Management System programmed to print out solely the last four digits of social security numbers, the Subcommittee will continue to explore the competing considerations of confidentiality and information-sharing of litigants' sensitive financial and other information, with particular attention to the problem of identity theft. The Subcommittee will address implementation issues regarding the recently enacted cash medical support legislation and will continue its consideration of court rules regarding judicial review of support magistrates' determinations of wilful violations, filing dates, inter-county transfers of cases and expedited support procedures. The Subcommittee will also explore possible improvements in evidentiary procedures in support cases, especially in light of technological advancements, and possible enhancements to the statutory provisions regarding joint, split and shared custody, multiple family situations and remedies for enforcement of orders against self-employed obligors.

- Custody, Visitation and Domestic Violence: The Subcommittee will continue its consideration of proposals to mitigate problems of conflicting orders of protection and of criminal orders that are "subject to" custody and visitation orders in Supreme and Family Courts. It will also continue to review the impact of custody mediation, collaborative law and parent coordinator programs and will explore proposals to enhance the courts' effectiveness in responding to domestic violence.

- Forms and Technology: The Subcommittee will prepare revisions to the Uniform Forms of the Family Court with respect to the new cash medical support statute, the new procedure regarding obtaining and safeguarding social security numbers and any legislation enacted in 2010. It will continue its efforts to simplify the current forms to enhance access to justice for self-represented litigants.

The Committee, which includes experienced judges, support magistrates, court attorney referees, Family Court clerks and practitioners drawn from throughout New York State, brings a variety of valuable perspectives to the task of addressing the crushing workload and complex problems facing the Family Court. The substantial expertise of the Committee's active and diverse membership contributed to significant accomplishments in 2009, including significant legislation enacted and promulgation of rules revisions and over 60 new and revised forms, each of which have been posted on the Unified Court System's Internet web-site for ready public access (<http://www.nycourts.gov>). With the substantial agenda described above, in 2010, the Committee hopes to compile a similar record of achievement as it grapples with the many difficult issues within its jurisdiction during these most difficult of times.

In conclusion, the Committee pledges its continuing deep dedication in 2010 to improving the functioning of the Family Court and the quality of justice it delivers.

Respectfully submitted,

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