



**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING FUND
AND THE COMMUNITIES HELPING IMPROVE LIVES DAILY (CHILD)
PROGRAM**

Written By: President Osariemen M. Elcock

WHEREAS, New York State has a responsibility to uphold its family policy guidelines by promoting safe, nurturing environments that support the healthy growth and development of all children and family members; and

WHEREAS, decades of redlining, racist disinvestment, and systemic inequities have resulted in communities across New York State experiencing vastly unequal neighborhood conditions, leaving many families in survival mode with limited trusted options for support; and

WHEREAS, research clearly demonstrates that neighborhood environments have profound effects on children's health, cognitive development, social mobility, and lifelong earnings; and

WHEREAS, studies further underscore that neighborhood enhancements including safe playspaces, greenery, access to nonprofit resources, civic engagement opportunities, childcare, food access, and a strong social fabric create significant benefits for children and families, even when individual families face hardships; and

WHEREAS, the Assembly's One House proposal establishes the Communities Helping Improve Lives Daily (CHILD) Program, including an \$80 million Child and Family Wellbeing Fund, consisting of \$50 million for community-based programs and \$30 million for capital investments, to strengthen neighborhoods historically disenfranchised and targeted for disproportionate intervention by the child protective system (CPS); and

WHEREAS, the Child and Family Wellbeing Fund is designed to support grassroots, community rooted organizations particularly small nonprofits that have long been locked out of government funding and ensures that only groups recommended by community members and without ties to the CPS system are eligible; and

WHEREAS, the Fund centers community expertise and lived experience by establishing advisory boards inclusive of parents and youth impacted by the child welfare system, and by requiring neighborhood asset mapping and local input in grantmaking decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Fund intentionally strengthens the social fabric of communities by adopting Asset-Based Community Development principles, investing in collective action, building

long-term nonprofit capacity, and expanding access to resources known to reduce family stress, enhance stability, and decrease the likelihood of unnecessary CPS involvement; and

WHEREAS, New York's current child welfare framework disproportionately reports families for issues rooted in poverty including homelessness, food insecurity, inability to access medical care, or lack of transportation rather than intentional harm, resulting in punitive intervention instead of supportive assistance; and

WHEREAS, families living in under-resourced communities are often surrounded by mandated reporters embedded in state funded programs, creating fear and mistrust that limits families' willingness to seek support; and

WHEREAS, the Child and Family Wellbeing Fund redefines what "child welfare" means in New York State by expanding access to community based, culturally grounded supports such as material assistance, mutual aid, maternal health resources, doulas, activities for children, peer groups, and other protective factors that promote family resilience and joy; and

WHEREAS, this Fund represents a critical opportunity to repair historic inequities, prevent unnecessary child welfare involvement, and ensure every child in New York grows up in a neighborhood designed to support their well-being; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we strongly urge the adoption of the Assembly's CHILD Program in the final enacted budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we call for the inclusion of Article VII legislation, modeled on Hevesi A63A and Brisport S6431, to formalize community-driven decision-making processes, neighborhood asset mapping, and transparent grant pathways within the Child and Family Wellbeing Fund; and be it further

RESOLVED, that New York State commits to redefining child welfare by prioritizing community investment, family stability, and neighborhood well-being ensuring that all children and families, especially those historically disenfranchised, have access to the resources, support, and environments they need to thrive.