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The Honorable Kathy Hochul

Governor of New York State

Executive Chamber

State Capitol

Albany, New York 12224

Re: Support for A.66 (Hevesi)/S.550 (Brisport)

Dear Governor Hochul,

I write on behalf of the New York State Bar Association to request that you approve A.66/S.550, which would amend the social services law in relation to the administration of the statewide central register of child abuse and maltreatment.

Federal statistics show that 96% of anonymous reports of child abuse or neglect prove to be unfounded or unsubstantiated after investigation.¹ In those cases, families are needlessly subjected to scrutiny by child protective workers who come into their homes, examine their children, request parents to submit to drug tests and leave children worrying that they will be removed from their families. Current New York law obligates only mandated reporters – those required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect – to provide their names and contact information when making a report to the State Central Registry of abuse or maltreatment (SCR). All other reporters can remain anonymous. The New York State Bar Association's Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Families and the Law Racial Justice and Child Welfare, adopted by the Association's House of Delegates in 2022, highlights why the law should be modernized to prohibit anonymous reports of child neglect.²

This legislation, A.66/S.550, would replace *anonymous* reporting with *confidential* reporting. Reports would be transmitted only to a local child protective service for investigation when the caller provides their name and contact information. The law would require that the personal identifying information of the reporter be kept confidential and not disclosed to the public or to

¹ Freundlich, Madelyn, Commentary: Anonymous child abuse allegations do more harm than good, Times Union (May 1, 2022). On average, only 3.5 percent of these anonymous reports are determined to be credible each year.

² [Committee-on-Families-and-the-Law-April-2022-approved.pdf](#)

the persons accused of abuse or neglect. Enacting this legislation would protect callers from potential retaliation by the subject of the report and reduce the number of baseless calls made by disgruntled neighbors, former romantic partners, and others who understand the power of a child protective services investigation to unsettle a family.

The New York State Bar Association **SUPPORTS** this legislation and urges that it be signed into law. We welcome the opportunity to meet with the Chamber to discuss A.66/S.550 and address any questions your office may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or NYSBA's General Counsel, David Miranda, who can be reached at dmiranda@nysba.org, 518-487-5524.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen M. Sweet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kathleen M. Sweet
President

Cc: Brian M. Mahanna, Esq., Counsel to the Governor
Denise Gagnon, Director of Legislative Services/ Legislative Secretary