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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

S1277 (Montgomery)/A 6057 (Errigo)

The New York Children's Action Network (New York CAN) is a broad-based coalition with a membership of over 170 coalitions, organizations and individuals providing a unified voice on behalf of children. New York CAN members believe that each child should have the opportunity to become a healthy, educated, productive and responsible adult. New York CAN is pleased to write in strong support of S1277/A 6057, an act amending social services law to establish a post-adoption services program that will expand a range of existing post-adoption services available to children and their adoptive and birth families.

The New York CAN supports the establishment of an expanded post-adoption services program within the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and recognizes that OCFS is required to provide access to a breadth of optional services including but not limited to therapeutic counseling for the child or family; local support groups for parents and children, parenting programs; help line services; crisis response teams; residential placement services; and referrals to other community support services, directly or by contract. This program will be available to any NYS resident who is adopted and under the age of 18 years or is the adoptive parent of a child under the age of 18.

Our support is predicated on the notion that a well-run, effective program will not only strengthen the safety, health, and well-being of the adoptive child but will help assure more successful adoptive placements while averting costly returns to the foster care, juvenile justice, and mental health systems.

Through preventive and aftercare funding initiated by the NYS Legislature, OCFS now has the benefit of several agencies operating post adoption service programs on a regional basis for several years. This experience will provide a solid basis for future planning and programs. Assignment of existing funds to support this new initiative will also be useful.

As such, New York CAN strongly urges swift passage and enactment of S1277/A 6057. We are grateful to the bill's legislative sponsors and supporters. Please feel free to contact Karen Schimke, New York CAN Convener at 463-1896, ext. 25 or by email at kschimke@scaany.org to further discuss the proposed legislation and/or the New York CAN position of support.

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