March 22, 2016

Dear Legislator:

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy urges the Legislature to support an anti-poverty initiative that is robustly funded and fairly distributed; includes maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting; and does not impose an onerous matching requirement on the very communities it aims to assist.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (Schuyler Center) is a 144-year-old statewide, nonprofit policy analysis and advocacy organization working to shape policies to strengthen families and improve health, welfare and human services for all New Yorkers.

The Assembly one-house budget bill builds upon the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative proposed by the Governor. The Assembly proposal expands the number of eligible communities, increases the total funding amount and outlines the types of programs and services for which the funding may be used. Significantly, the proposal specifically identifies maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting as an eligible intervention.

A quarter of a million babies are born in New York each year; nearly half are born into low-income families and over 100,000 are born to first-time mothers.¹ Children in low-income households have been shown to experience worse outcomes than their peers, particularly related to literacy, school readiness² and health³. Maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting works with low-income families, and often with first-time mothers, and is proven to strengthen parenting skills and generate better outcomes for children and families. Home visiting delivers education, support and connections to other resources to families on their terms, in their own homes.

Strong evidence shows that smart investments in home visiting programs for new and expectant families deliver positive outcomes and measurable savings—improved birth outcomes⁴, increased school readiness,⁵, ⁶ increased parental employment, decreased dependence on welfare,⁷, ⁸ decreased in child abuse,⁹ x and reduced future mental health and criminal justice costs. Despite this strong evidence, New York State has failed to make a significant investment in home visiting.

For the reasons above, the Schuyler Center supports a robust anti-poverty proposal that:

- Includes evidence-based and evidence-informed maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting.
- Is robustly and fairly funded, based on need, and does not require an onerous match.

Sincerely,

Kate Breslin,
President and CEO

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This memo is supported by the following organizations:

The Children's Agenda, *Monroe County*
Comprehensive Interdisciplinary Developmental Services, *Chemung County*
Early Care & Learning Council
The Institute for Family Health, *New York City & the Hudson Valley*
Nurse-Family Partnership
Parents as Teachers
The Parent Child Home Program
Prevent Child Abuse New York
Public Health Solutions, *New York City*
Westchester Children’s Association, *Westchester County*

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8. Nurse-Family Partnership Efforts-to-Outcomes system; data as of 3/31/11 and the NYC Department of Education 2010; [Rough estimate of rate of high school completion among teen mothers]. This is a special data point analysis conducted by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.