

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

S.550-A/A.66-A

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy urges New York’s legislature to pass S.550-A/A.66-A, to require reporters to the State Central Register to confidentially provide their name and contact information, ending the state’s practice of accepting anonymous reports.

The Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy is a 153-year-old statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to policy analysis and advocacy in support of public systems that meet the needs of disenfranchised populations and people living in poverty.

Each year, anonymous reports to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) lead to thousands of unnecessary, often traumatic investigations into New York families, which are eventually determined to be unfounded.¹ These investigations can be extremely stressful to parents and harmful to children. They also divert state resources from legitimate cases that deserve and require timely attention.

Domestic violence survivors are among the New Yorkers particularly vulnerable to malicious SCR reports under the current anonymous reporting system. This system enables abusers to use New York’s child welfare system as means to repeatedly harass survivors and their children.

The harms of unnecessary investigations based on false reports fall disproportionately on Black and Brown New Yorkers earning low incomes.² The New York State Bar Association concluded in a report on racial justice in March 2022 that it is an “urgent imperative to end the unnecessary disruption and destruction of Black families caused by the child welfare system.”³ To help address this issue, the Bar Association specifically called on legislators to prohibit anonymous reports to the State Central Register.⁴

The Anti-Harassment in Reporting bill, S.550-A/A.66-A, offers a responsive solution that will substantially cut down on malicious false reporting by requiring callers who make allegations of child abuse and neglect to provide their names and contact information. The bill provides strict confidentiality to those who make reports—the information can only be accessed by the Office of Children and Family Services and counties—and will deter some of those who would otherwise make false reports, while allowing Child Protective Services to better assess allegations. For callers who insist on anonymity, the bill requires the supervisor to speak with those callers, and provide them with a full explanation of the confidentiality rules surrounding reports, and alternative avenues for them to seek support for the child if they are unwilling to provide their contact information. This is a commonsense reform that represents an important step toward making New York’s child welfare system more effective and equitable.

May 28, 2025

¹ Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy. (2025). *A Family-First Approach to Child Welfare in New York State*. <https://scaany.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Fostering-Transparency-Child-Welfare-2025-Schuyler-Center-One-Pager.pdf>

² *Id.*

³ New York State Bar Association Committee on Families and the Law. (2022). *Report and Recommendations on Racial Justice and Child Welfare*. <https://nysba.org/committees/committee-on-families-and-the-law/?srsltid=AfmBOogr9KyUBchU-2OQYh6e9NVydtb5y1O77VPyMcrGZ988pRw9shq>

⁴ *Id.* at 28.