NEW YORK MANDATED REPORTING WORKING GROUP

Who We Are

NY MRWG | THE NEW YORK MANDATED REPORTING WORKING GROUP

A collaborative developing policy solutions to end the harms of mandated reporting and CPS investigations in New York State

OVERVIEW

The New York Mandated Reporting Working Group (NY MRWG) includes mandated reporters, people impacted by the child welfare system (what we refer to as the family policing system), advocates, legal professionals, and researchers. We are united by a common goal of ending the harm of mandated reporting laws and invasive child protective services (CPS) investigations through policy and legislative change. We believe that a new approach grounded in evidence, collaboration, and trust is needed to strengthen families and ensure child safety.

THE PROBLEM

Mandated reporting laws require professionals who work with children to report suspected child abuse & neglect to the statewide hotline. However, decades of research, data, & lived experiences demonstrate that these laws don't work as intended: they don't make children safer, don't prevent child abuse, & don't increase accuracy in reporting. Instead, mandated reporting fuels over-reporting of families for poverty-related circumstances, subjects families to scrutiny & trauma through investigations, and shatters trust between families & the professionals they rely on for help. These practices disproportionately surveil & separate Black, Indigenous, & under-resourced families. Additionally, a high volume of unsubstantiated reports is costly, burdensome, and inefficient for CPS agencies. The mandate to report also restricts professionals' discretion and flexibility to provide resources and build support around families due to the fear of facing penalties for not reporting.

OUR WORK

The NY MRWG is building public awareness about the reality of mandated reporting. Through historical and legal research, assessment of mandated reporting reform efforts across the country, data analysis, community engagement and listening, statewide collaboration, and legislative advocacy, the NY MRWG is advancing policies and practices that better promote child safety, family well-being, and professionals' ability to support families in the most effective ways.

"I think there's something very uncomfortable with punishing a parent who's struggling with mental health or substance use through a report if there are other ways to get urgent support in the home."
– A mandated reporter in healthcare

REPORTING FACTS FOR NEW YORK STATE

137k Reports made to the hotline in 2025

73% Of reports were made by mandated reporters

ONLY 22% Of reports resulted in a substantiated case of child maltreatment

7X Greater likelihood of Black families being reported compared to white families

Sign up to learn more and get involved!

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SUPPORTING FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT

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The Supporting Families Together Act (SFTA) responds to concerns raised by teachers, healthcare providers, social workers, families, and advocates across NY that current laws encourage overreporting to Child Protective Services (CPS) even when professionals don't believe a child is in danger.

This bill would remove civil & criminal penalties for mandated reporters, empowering them to exercise their professional judgment and focus on supporting families without the threat of punitive legal consequences.

In 2025, New York received 137,215 CPS reports. 4 out of 5 reports were not substantiated.

NY spent an estimated $964M on CPS in SFY 2024, 98% from state & local funds.

Sources: NYS Office of Children and Family Services; Child Trends

The Problem

The law puts professionals in a difficult position.

Mandated reporters feel pressure to report "just in case" due to liability concerns, even when their professional judgment & expertise tells them a family needs support, not a CPS investigation.

Over-reporting strains the child protective system.

Reports lead to investigations that are traumatic for families and time/resource intensive for CPS agencies. This strains caseworkers' ability to respond to children facing genuine danger.

Families are discouraged from seeking help.

The current policy disrupts trusting relationships with professionals & discourages families from accessing needed services, due to their fear of being reported, investigated, & separated.

Families Need Support, Not Surveillance

Under current law, mandated reporters can face a Class A misdemeanor or civil liability for not reporting. The SFTA would remove these penalties. This bill is an important step toward:

1. **Encouraging trust-based relationships between service providers & families, so families can access help without fear.**
2. **Ensuring professionals can support families in the best ways, by ending the penalty structure that pressures them into unnecessarily overreporting.**
3. **Increasing child safety by reducing the volume of non-safety-related reports & investigations that burden CPS agencies and harm families.**

The SFTA maintains the legal mandate for professionals to report suspected child abuse & neglect to CPS.

What you can do to help: Join our campaign! Share this info widely. Write a memo in support. Urge your legislators to sign-on!