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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Parents, Public Defenders, and Advocates Hail Passage of the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act; Urge Governor to Sign Into Law

(Albany, NY) - Today, the New York State Assembly passed [the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act](#), which would reduce false and malicious reports of abuse and neglect made by anonymous callers to New York's State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). The New York State Senate passed the legislation on June 9th.

New York State allows anyone to make a report of child maltreatment to the SCR without providing any personal information. As a result, anonymous reports are often used to harass parents through false and malicious reporting. Angry exes, unscrupulous landlords, and feuding neighbors use anonymous reporting to call in false allegations against parents. [Domestic violence survivors report that their abusers routinely use anonymous reporting as a harassment tool](#). State law requires the family policing system (FPS) to conduct an investigation of every allegation of child neglect or abuse, even if the report is clearly part of a pattern of harassment.

Thousands of New York families each year are forced to endure lengthy, invasive, and stressful investigations because of anonymous reports. [Of parents investigated on the basis of an anonymous report in New York City, 93% are cleared of all wrongdoing after an initial investigation](#). Even more are cleared after having the opportunity to challenge the accusations in court or at an administrative hearing.

SCR reports and investigations disproportionately impact Black and Latine families in New York. [A 2024 report to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights showed that Black families in New York City were 6.7 times more likely to be subjected to an investigation than white families](#).

The Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act offers a simple solution to drastically reduce the number of malicious false reports. In order to deter these harmful reports, the bill requires that callers provide their name and contact information when making a report to the hotline. This information would be kept confidential, while still allowing FPS the ability to speak with the source of the report as part of their investigation.

“One anonymous call changed the course of my life. While my family survived the experience, it revealed the devastating power this system holds over so many others. That call pushed me to shift my entire career — to organize, to advocate, and to stand alongside families impacted by a system that claims to help, but too often harms. Every day, I work with families who live in fear of that knock on the door. I’m proud to join fellow impacted families, family policing abolitionists, and family defenders across New York in calling on Governor Hochul to sign this bill. We won’t stop until every family in this state can sleep more peacefully, knowing that one part of this harmful system is no longer allowed to operate unchecked,” **said Shalonda Curtis-Hackett, the Community Outreach Coordinator and Policy Associate at NDS Harlem.**

“New York families have been asking for the legislature to pass the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act for years because of the immense harm that children and parents experience from the harassment and subsequent investigations by those weaponizing the system,” **said Joyce McMillan, Founder and Executive Director of Just Making A Change for Families (JMACforFamilies).** “I was impacted in 1999. I still don’t know who reported my family, but the pain of that investigation still exists in my family today. Thank you to Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi and Senator Jabari Brisport for listening and leading on this bill. We urge Governor Hochul to sign it into law immediately.”

“Thousands of New York families every year experience invasive and often traumatic investigations at the hands of family policing agents because an anonymous caller made a false allegation to the SCR hotline,” **said Nila Natarajan, Associate Director of Policy & Family Defense at Brooklyn Defenders’ Family Defense Practice.** “The Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act is a simple and common-sense change to the law that provides needed transparency and accountability and protects families from unnecessary contact with the family policing system. We thank sponsors Senator Jabari Brisport and Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi for championing the rights of families and urge Governor Hochul to immediately sign this legislation into law.”

“The Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act is a significant step towards reducing the number of New York families subjected to unnecessary, invasive, and traumatizing investigations,” **said Jenna Lauter, Policy Counsel at the New York Civil Liberties Union.** “This simple and sensible bill will make it harder for bad actors to weaponize the family regulation system against parents and children as a tool of harassment and intimidation. We urge the Governor to sign this commonsense legislation without delay.”

"The passage of the Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act marks an important step toward reducing the expansive and harmful reach of New York's family policing system," said **Jesse McGleughlin, Policy Counsel in the Family Defense Practice at The Bronx Defenders.** "The Anti-Harassment Act is a commonsense solution to a problem that has gone unchecked

for too long: the weaponization of the family policing system to the detriment of thousands of New York families. We are grateful for the parents impacted by the system who have worked tirelessly to advance this legislation and who continue to fight until all families are supported rather than policed; and for sponsors Senator Jabari Brisport and Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi who have been steadfast in their commitment to Anti-Harassment Act and the rights of families. We urge Governor Hochul to follow suit and sign this legislation into law.”

"Family policing investigations in New York State - which disproportionately impact Black and brown families - are terrifying for families who experience them. For too long, these investigations have been weaponized by anonymous callers for the purpose of controlling or harassing families,” **said Hannah Mercuris, Supervising Attorney for Policy and Early Defense, Center for Family Representation.** “The Anti-Harassment in Reporting Act is an important step in reducing the number of families who experience the harm of family policing investigations. We are thankful to Senator Jabari Brisport and Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi for advocating so strongly for New York families and we ask Governor Hochul to listen to families and sign this bill into law.”

"The **NYU School of Law Family Defense Clinic** faculty and students were proud to support community efforts to end anonymous reporting," **said Clinic Director, Chris Gottlieb.** "Report after report has recommended shifting from anonymous to confidential reporting. We applaud Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi and Senator Jabari Brisport for listening to families on the need for change. We urge Governor Hochul to do the same."

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