

# 2026 POLICY AGENDA

As HOPE585 works to move youth and families from systemic trauma toward power and belonging, we have developed policy priorities focused on narrowing the front door to child welfare and ensuring that youth in the foster system have access to the resources and benefits they deserve.



## UNNECESSARY CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT (NARROWING THE FRONT DOOR)

- **Supporting Families Together Act (A.9283/S.8602)** - The SFTA eliminates fear-driven reporting by shielding mandated reporters from civil and criminal liability when they act in good faith. It preserves the legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect to CPS, while removing the punitive pressures that have led professionals to file unnecessary “just in case” reports.
- **Maternal Health, Dignity and Consent Act (A.860/S.845)** - A New York State racial and reproductive justice bill that would require healthcare providers to obtain written and verbal informed consent from perinatal people before drug testing or screening them or their newborns.



## PROTECTING FAMILY RIGHTS AND DUE PROCESS

- **Family Miranda Bill (A.1234/S.551)** - Requires child protective services to orally and in writing disclose certain information to parents and caretakers who are the subject of a child protective services investigation



## ENSURING SUPPORT FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

- **Economic Justice for Kids in Foster Care (A.8036/S.7778)** - Ensures that children in foster care across New York State receive and retain access to the federal benefits intended for them. This bill prohibits agencies from using children’s benefits to offset the cost of care.
- **Safe Landings Act** - Youth who leave foster care to live on their own can seek the Family Court’s help when agencies fail to comply with court orders issued before the youth left care that required the agencies to provide support with basic needs such as housing, documents, and driver’s licenses.
- **The Are Youth Listening Act** - New legislation would reduce the number of children and youth placed in congregate settings and provide new resources to counties to support community-based care.



## PRESERVING FAMILIES

- **Preserving Family Bonds (A.5394/S.S6720)** - Recognizes the importance of maintaining healthy family connecting when safe and appropriate. This bill establishes procedures regarding orders of post-termination visitation and/or contact between a child and such child’s parent.
- **The Child and Family Wellbeing Fund** - Designed to fund community-led projects that strengthen families, reduce their vulnerability to contact with the child welfare system, and invest in supports that enhance family preservation, reunification, and healing.