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**Statement of Jennifer March-Joly  
Regarding SFY 2012-2013 Executive Budget Proposals  
to Reform the Juvenile Justice System**

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) applauds Governor Cuomo for his steadfast commitment to reforming the State's juvenile justice system to better serve youth and keep communities safer.

Last year, the Governor made a significant down payment on reform by eliminating costly and empty beds, closing placement facilities that were far from where youth lived, and creating a statutory funding mechanism for alternatives to detention and placement programs. Today, with the release of the SFY 2012-2013 Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo advances an ambitious set of juvenile justice proposals that create a more cost-effective system that will produce better outcomes for youth and communities throughout New York State.

The centerpiece of the reform proposals is the "Close to Home" initiative, which will allow New York City's youth to be served in New York City. Once the City develops a plan, with community input, this proposal will transition custody of youth placed in non-secure and limited-secure facilities from the State to New York City. This proposal ensures that New York City's youth can reside in a facility that is close to their homes, when placement is needed, and gives the City the opportunity to reach greater number of youth through proven alternatives to placement programs. Notably, treatment and placement for youth in their communities ensures that they benefit from visits and engagement with their family members, regular contact with their attorneys, and that the educational credits they earn in placement will transfer upon discharge. Furthermore, placement close to home allows for more seamless re-entry when youth are discharged back from facility care.

Due to the decreased need for capacity in the state placement system created by the this proposal, the Executive Budget also proposes to close additional facilities and to do so in a manner that allows for the possibility of regional placements for youth outside New York City. Additional reform proposals would also require a pre-dispositional risk assessment instrument to better inform the recommendations put forth in the Family Court by local Departments of Probation. Together, these proposals will save New York City and the other counties money this fiscal year and in future fiscal years.

We applaud Governor Cuomo for advancing proposals that ensure youth involved in the juvenile justice system receive the care and services that they deserve and which will result in safer communities throughout the State.

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) is the oldest locally based, independent child advocacy organization, in New York and has spent many years advocating for improvements to New York's juvenile justice system.