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**GOVERNOR PATERSON'S PROPOSED BUDGET CLOSES FY10-11 \$7.6 BILLION GAP:
RAISES REVENUE, PROTECTS SOME VITAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN,
BUT MUST GO FURTHER TO PROTECT THE YOUNGEST NEW YORKERS**

NEW YORK – In difficult economic times, it is critical that New York State continue to invest in programs that protect and address the needs of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, particularly children.

The Executive Budget for FY 2010-2011, released by Governor Paterson today, innovatively raises revenue, reduces expenditures, and protects many essential programs for children and families. CCC applauds Governor Paterson for advancing a thoughtful and balanced approach to the budget; but we ask the Governor and the State Legislature, to go further to ensure that investments in programs that produce positive outcomes for children are maintained in these difficult fiscal times.

Last year, CCC commissioned a poll on tax policy options that documented the support of a majority of New Yorkers (over 70 percent) for the establishment of an excise tax on sugar sweetened beverages, when the revenue raised would be invested in health care programming. CCC supports the Governor's *Healthier New York* initiative as it will improve the health and well-being of generations of New Yorkers, by imposing an excise tax on sugar sweetened beverages and reinvesting revenue in the State's health budget. "In New York City, 21% of children ages 6-11 are obese, which increases their risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, strokes and cancer. The proposed tax will reduce the consumption of unhealthy beverages, have a positive impact on the fight against childhood obesity, and significantly reduce the State's future health care costs." said Citizens' Committee for Children Executive Director, Jennifer March-Joly. In addition, CCC also supports the Governor's proposal to increase the excise tax on cigarettes by a \$1.00 per pack.

CCC also commends the Governor for preserving funding for many core services for children in the Executive Budget. Specifically, we are pleased to see that there were no cuts proposed to foster care, child welfare preventive services, Child Health Plus, child care or Universal Pre-Kindergarten. And while we appreciate the inclusion of subsidized kinship guardianship as a permanency option for children in foster care, we are disappointed to see that localities will need to finance this initiative without true state support.

The Executive Budget also begins to make investments needed to improve the conditions of care in the State's juvenile placement facilities by investing \$18.2 million for 169 additional staff to improve the staff-to-youth ratios and to provide for improved medical and mental health services for youth in state facilities. The Executive Budget also continues to right-size the juvenile justice system by

proposing to close or consolidate four juvenile correction facilities. The need for such investments and action was well documented in the federal Department of Justice report as well as CCC's report, *Inside Out: Youth Experiences Inside New York's Juvenile Placement Facilities*.

And yet, CCC is very disappointed that the Governor's Executive Budget fails to maintain its commitment to decrease the number of children who are actually placed in the State's juvenile placement facilities – by eliminating \$11 million in funds for community based alternative to detention and placement programs. These cost-effective programs enable youth to remain in their home communities and receive services, rather than be locked-up in costly state placement facilities. "CCC looks forward to working with other advocates and the State Legislature to defeat this proposal and to secure a shared approach to funding sorely needed alternatives to detention and placement services," said Ailin Chen, CCC's Senior Policy Associate for Juvenile Justice.

Also of great concern, the Executive Budget proposes to eliminate many services that are currently funded through TANF funds and local assistance allocations. Proposed reductions include cuts to home visiting programs (Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families New York), the Advantage After School Program, and the Summer Youth Employment Program. The State Legislature must restore cuts to these services, as these programs advert risk and the need for more costly interventions for infants, toddlers, and teens. Additionally troublesome, the Executive Budget proposes to levy a parent fee for Early Intervention Services. "Especially during an economic downturn, we must not force parents to choose between paying for a service for their special needs infant or toddler or buying basic necessities such as diapers or food," said Stephanie Gendell, the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Public Affairs at Citizens' Committee for Children.

Finally, CCC remains concerned about the negative fiscal impact that the Governor's Executive Budget would have on New York City. Notably, the State Executive Budget eliminates over \$300 million New York City was due to receive through the Aid to Municipalities (AIM) initiative.

"In these difficult economic times, it is clear that prudent and difficult choices must be made. While we support many of the revenue and cost-saving proposals advanced by the Governor today, we ask that the Governor and the State Legislature go further in their efforts to protect investments in proven programs for children. Maintaining such investments is cost-effective, the right thing to do for New York's children, and may well require the consideration of additional revenue options." added March-Joly.

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