Statement in Response to Governor Cuomo’s proclamation of September as Kinship Care month

Citizens’ Committee for Children (CCC) and Schuyler Center for Advocacy and Analysis (SCAA) thank Governor Cuomo for proclaiming September Kinship Care month. As the Governor states, kinship caregivers provide unparalleled support to hundreds of thousands of New York children, including foster children, by “providing a stable household in which they can receive the nurturing love, care and support that will help them grow into successful and strong adults.” We applaud the State for recognizing and supporting kinship caregivers by awarding funds for 12 kinship programs and investing in the NYS Kinship Navigator.

We urge the Governor to demonstrate the State’s commitment to kinship caregivers by signing A7554/S4833 (Hevesi/Avella) today, during Kinship Care Month. This bill, which enhances the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP) will help those kinship caregivers who have committed to permanently care for children from the foster care system by enabling the subsidy to remain in place until age 21, allowing half siblings to be treated as a sibling group, and expanding the KinGAP definition of kin to include fictive kin, such as godparents, as is done for kinship foster care. We can think of no better way for the Governor to honor Kinship Care Month, and New York’s devoted kinship families, than by signing this bill.

“This bill is an important step toward ensuring more children are able to leave foster care for stable, permanent homes with people who care for them. We applaud Senator Avella and Assembly member Hevesi for their leadership on this issue and for being a voice for New York’s children at the Capitol. We thank the Legislature for passing this legislation and urge the Governor to sign it into law,” said Kari Siddiqui, Senior Policy Analyst, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy.

“This bill will make a tremendous difference in the lives of so many children and youth currently stuck in foster care who can now have permanent relationships with relatives and the people in their lives who are like relatives but not technically related by blood, adoption or marriage. CCC is so grateful to Assembly member Hevesi and Senator Avella for taking the lead in the efforts to improve the outcomes of youth who would otherwise likely age out of foster care, and we look forward to the Governor signing this bill as soon as possible,” said Stephanie Gendell, Associate Executive Director for Policy and Advocacy, Citizens’ Committee for Children.