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**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK STATE YMCAS
TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO
JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET
HEARING ON HUMAN SERVICES**

SUBMITTED BY

**KYLE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK STATE YMCAS**

About the Y

My name is Kyle Stewart and I am the Executive Director of the Alliance of New York State YMCAs and the New York State YMCA Foundation. The Alliance of New York State YMCAs represents the 43 separately incorporated Ys across New York State with over 130 facilities and hundreds more program sites statewide.

The Y is a cause-driven, high impact charitable nonprofit which aims to deliver lasting personal and social development to people of all ages, races, backgrounds and faiths. At the Y, everything we do is to support youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Providing essential human services such as early child care; afterschool programs and supportive housing and counseling services, have been part of the Y's mission for over 150 years. Each YMCA offers community-strengthening programs and services customized to the needs of the individuals and communities they serve.

I would like to briefly outline a few programs that Ys have identified as state budget priorities for this year.

Investing in Human Services Organizations

As a cause-drive charitable nonprofit, the Y strengthens communities and families throughout the state with its many programs and services. The Y strengthens families and communities through several means, not the least of which are our facilities. From an anti-bullying afterschool program to falls prevention classes for older adults, the Y is fulfilling its mission, in some cases, within Y facilities that are in need of improvement. We are in strong support of the Executive Budget's proposed \$50 million nonprofit infrastructure fund and appreciate Governor Cuomo's recognition of the importance of nonprofits, but we respectfully submit that the total allocation is inadequate when compared to the need.

In fact, we are compiling a list YMCA capital improvement projects that are shovel-ready. We have not yet finished compiling the list but thus far, we have nearly \$25 million in projects that would benefit from the non-profit infrastructure funds. Projects range from building a new facility to installing an energy-efficient HVAC system. Funding projects like these, both at the Y and other non-profit human services organizations, will allow non-profits to keep providing high-quality and community-strengthening services for years to come.

The non-profit infrastructure fund should also be a vehicle for investments in policy, systems, and environmental change strategies to improve the health and quality of life for all children and families of the Empire State. For example, with a \$1 million investment of state funds, the Y would be able to train and provide resources to fully implement its Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards at over 450 YMCA afterschool program sites statewide.

Finally, an investment in the Y is an investment in the state and local economies. For every dollar invested in a nonprofit, three dollars in services are returned to the community. Community-based nonprofits also strengthen the state's workforce. The Y employs over 20,000 New Yorkers to deliver our essential programs and services.

Afterschool Programs

The Y is the largest afterschool provider in the state, and each year serves over 1 million children and youth. The current Advantage Afterschool funding is vital to ensure that all of New York's children have access to afterschool care. Even with the current Advantage Afterschool funds of \$17.7 million, there are still over 1 million youth in need of an afterschool program. Providing additional funding for quality afterschool providers, like the Y, would allow afterschool programs to expand their reach. Participation in an afterschool program has been shown to decrease the achievement gap between high and low income students, as well as increase school attendance and engagement and decrease the incidence of criminal behavior. We respectfully ask that \$178.5 million in new funds be added to the state budget for afterschool programs. These new funds would allow 110,000 new students to begin attending an afterschool program.

The Y is open to every family and child and many families that the Y serves receive DSS child care subsidies. We were glad to see that child care subsidies were maintained in the governor's executive budget, and support increased funding to this important budget line item as well.

Exempt Nonprofit Child Care Providers from the SCR Fee

In his 2015 Opportunity Agenda, Governor Cuomo recommended eliminating several "nuisance fees" across multiple state agencies. We believe that an excellent example of a nuisance fee to nonprofit child care providers is the \$25 per employee Statewide Central Register (SCR) clearance fee that was adopted a few years ago. We are

extremely supportive and thankful to Senator Gallivan and Assembly Majority Leader Morelle, who introduced S544/A3058 again this year which would exempt nonprofit child care providers from this fee. We believe that this legislation, eliminating this fee, should be included in the state budget. Exempting non-profits that provide child care services from the \$25 per employee fee would allow us to continue to serve our communities at the highest possible level while costing the state well under \$1 million. We respectfully ask that the SCR clearance fee be added to the list of "nuisance fees" and that non-profits be exempt from the \$25 per employee fee.

Conclusion

Community-based organizations such as the Y bring added value to advancing all human services programs and initiatives. YMCA staff are on the ground in each community we serve, know the community's needs and have gained the trust of families and community leaders. The Y is a critical part of the human services landscape in New York, and is eager to work with the state to deliver community-strengthening services. Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today and I am happy to take any questions that you may have.