



2019 Annual Report

**New York State Senate Standing Committee
on Social Services**

**Senator Roxanne J. Persaud
Chairperson**



CHAIR
SOCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEES
BANKS
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND SMALL BUSINESS
LABOR
TRANSPORTATION

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



SENATOR ROXANNE J. PERSAUD
19TH SENATE DISTRICT

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January 2, 2020

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
Room 907, Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Leader Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit this Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Services for the 2019 Legislative Session. Under your leadership of the Majority Conference, New Yorkers have witnessed historic changes that will improve lives for generations to come. It is my honor to serve not only as Senator for the 19th District in Brooklyn, one of the most struggling districts in New York State, but also as Chair of the Social Services Committee.

In 2019, the Social Services Committee conducted five meetings and reported sixteen pieces of legislation, nine of which passed both the Senate and the Assembly prior to the June recess. We had robust discussions on poverty and income insecurity; hunger; combatting domestic violence and human trafficking; unprecedented levels of homelessness throughout our state; services and advocacy for individuals with disabilities; fairness in welfare-to-work programs and our struggling human services workforce.

The Social Services Committee convened and co-sponsored hearings and roundtable discussions to learn from experts on family and childhood poverty, vulnerable youth as well as ways to mitigate threats to New York's social safety-net coming from Washington. We plan to continue coordinated efforts with the Committees on Children & Families and Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities, respectively, to address myriad human services issues affecting all New Yorkers, whether they live in Canarsie or Cazenovia. It has been a pleasure to work with your Counsel/Program and Finance Committee staff throughout this process.

I thank you for this responsibility and look forward to continuing our work on policies and initiatives to assist the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roxanne J. Persaud".

Senator Roxanne J. Persaud
Chair, Standing Committee on Social Services

**NEW YORK STATE SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES**

Senator Roxanne J. Persaud, Chair

Committee Members

Senator Timothy M. Kennedy Senator Zellnor Myrie Senator Gustavo Rivera Senator Julia Salazar	Senator Susan J. Serino, Ranking Member Senator James Tedisco
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Committee Staff

Dennis Weakley, Committee Director
Tamara Frazier, Senior Counsel
John DiVito, Senior Budget Analyst

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Social Services has legislative oversight responsibilities for a broad range of issues including, but not limited to, poverty reduction programs; assistance to victims and survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking; assistance for individuals with disabilities; workforce readiness; and a vast network of programs for vulnerable New Yorkers administered or funded through the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA),

During the 2019 Legislative Session, 65 bills were referred to the Social Services Committee for review. Of these bills, 16 were reported from the Committee; 13 were passed by the Senate; and nine passed in both houses. This work was conducted through a series of five Committee meetings. A comprehensive list of all bills reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee held one public hearing, conducted three roundtable discussions and co-convened four additional roundtables in conjunction with other Senate Committees. Topics of discussion included:

- *Assessing Impact of Proposed Federal Changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Official Poverty Measure (OPM)*
- *Examining the Prevalence of Youth Violence*
- *Public Assistance Income & Resource Limits*
- *Impact of Timeliness on Youth in Foster Care*
- *Examining the State of our Youth: New York State Foster Care*
- *Examining the State of our Youth: Mental Health Services in Central NY*
- *Home Grown: A Round Table Discussion on Youth and the Future of Work in Upstate New York*

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the Standing Committee on Social Services in 2019:

S2375 (Krueger)/A1620 (Hevesi) *relates to home stability support supplement programs.*

This bill would authorize a new Home Stability Support Program whereby eligible public assistance recipients and/or those facing an imminent loss of housing may receive a shelter supplement equal to 85% of the FMR along with funds for heating assistance to prevent eviction from their established home and thus eliminate the need to enter an emergency shelter. This program would be administered by each local social services district using state funds. Last action: committed to the Rules Committee on 6/20/2019.

S5552 (Persaud)/A339 (Joyner) *relates to the creation of a self-sufficiency standard study.*

The Department of Labor would contract with a third party to produce a self-sufficiency standard study containing up-to-date information on poverty in all areas of the state. The resulting data would provide policy makers with detailed information on poverty in their communities as well as help individuals living in poverty to create a basic needs budget based on their location to help foster financial literacy and economic security. A report would be due to the Governor and Legislature every two years. Last action: Passed Senate on 6/19/2019.

S3840 (May)/A2455 (Hunter) *relates to conciliation and non-compliance with public assistance employment.*

This bill would establish a uniform statewide policy concerning durational sanctions that are issued by local social services districts for non-compliance with employment program requirements; shifting the focus from imposing sanctions to curing non-compliance and re-engagement with employment programs. This legislation expands upon substantial reforms to the process in the City of New York under Chapter 562 of the Laws of 2015. Last action: Veto memo #215 on 12/13/2019.

S4809 (Persaud)/A4256 (Hevesi) *relates to the unearned income of a child.*

When an individual applies for public assistance, everyone (including children) in the household must apply. Household public assistance budgets are calculated based on the total earned and unearned income of all individuals including dependents. When a child is placed in kinship care in a public assistance household, that child's unearned income is considered household income. This bill would separate that child's unearned income so as not to financially harm the entire household. Last action: Veto memo #164 on 11/25/2019.

S4641 (Persaud)/A4236 (Hevesi) *provides factors and requirements to be considered and followed when health care practitioner's diagnosis differs from treating health care practitioner as to disability.*

Legislation would allow more weight to be given to medical determinations made by an individual's treating practitioner (family physician, surgeon or other specialist) in the context of said individual being evaluated by a consultative practitioner contracted by the local social services district. Last action: Veto memo #179 on 12/6/2019.

S2625 (Lanza)/A5608 (Weinstein) *expands the crimes included in domestic violence to include identity theft, grand larceny and coercion, for purposes of assistance to victims thereof.*

Makes conforming changes to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in the Social Services Law by adding "identity theft", "grand larceny" and "coercion" as forms of economic abuse that may constitute domestic violence. Last action: Chapter 153 on 8/8/2019.

TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2019, nine of the 65 bills referred to the Standing Committee on Social Services passed both houses of the Legislature. Of these bills, the Governor has signed five and vetoed four.

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Action
S1089	Persaud	Exempts certain funds in a Qualified Tuition Program in the calculation of household benefits under public assistance programs.	Chapter 323 of 2019 on 10/3/2019.
S2625	Lanza	Expands the crimes included in domestic violence to include identity theft, grand larceny and coercion, for purposes of assistance to victims thereof.	Chapter 153 of 2019 on 8/8/2019.
S2659	Savino	Relates to mandating training of direct care workers in adverse childhood experiences.	Chapter 391 of 2019 on 10/23/2019.
S3465	Biaggi	Relates to employee human trafficking recognition training and to authorizing the establishment of a standardized human trafficking recognition training program; requires public transportation services to require all employees to undergo a human-trafficking recognition training program established by the Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in consultation with the Department of Transportation and the New York State Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking.	Veto memo #240 on 12/20/2019.
S3840	May	Relates to conciliation and non-compliance with public assistance employment.	Veto memo #215 on 12/13/2019
S4339	Salazar	Relates to providing rent subsidies to individuals living with roommates.	Chapter 624 of 2019 on 12/12/2019.
S4809	Persaud	Relates to the unearned income of a child when the parent or non-parent caregiver chooses to exclude such child from the public assistance household.	Veto memo #164 on 11/25/2019.
S4641	Persaud	Establishes factors and requirements to be considered when a health care practitioner's opinion differs from that of an applicant's treating health care practitioner's opinion as to an applicant's disability.	Veto memo #179 on 12/6/2019
S5402	Persaud	Exempts certain funds in NY ABLE savings accounts from the calculation of household benefits under public assistance programs.	Chapter 329 of 2019 on 10/3/2019.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Action
S722	Montgomery	Relates to training and education for sustainable wage jobs and traditional and non-traditional employment in public assistance employment programs.	Reported to Finance: 5/7/2019.
S1089	Persaud	Exempts certain funds in a Qualified Tuition Program in the calculation of household benefits under public assistance programs.	Chapter 323 of 2019 on 10/3/2019.
S2174	Bailey	Ensures adequate access to information by individuals who have limited English proficiency.	Reported to Calendar: 2/4/2019.
S2375	Krueger	Relates to the creation of Home Stability Support Supplement Programs.	Reported to Finance: 3/5/2019, reported to Floor Calendar on 4/30/2019.
S2601	Serino	Provides Supplemental Security Income for eligible individuals receiving Enhanced Residential Care.	Reported to Finance: 3/5/2019.
S2625	Lanza	Expands the crimes included in domestic violence to include identity theft, grand larceny and coercion, for purposes of assistance to victims thereof.	Chapter 153 of 2019 on 8/8/2019.
S2659	Savino	Relates to mandating training of direct care workers in adverse childhood experiences.	Chapter 391 of 2019 on 10/23/2019.
S3041	Sanders	Relates to public notice of basic rights by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for applicants and recipients of public assistance.	Reported to Calendar: 5/29/2019. Passed Senate: 6/12/2019.
S3465	Biaggi	Relates to employee human trafficking recognition training and to authorizing the establishment of a standardized human trafficking recognition training program; requires public transportation services to require all employees to undergo a human-trafficking recognition training program established by the Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in consultation with the Department of Transportation and the New York State Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking.	Veto memo #240 on 12/20/2019.
S3840	May	Relates to conciliation and non-compliance with public assistance employment.	Veto memo #215 on 12/13/2019
S4339	Salazar	Relates to providing rent subsidies to individuals living with roommates.	Chapter 624 of 2019 on 12/12/2019.
S4704	Salazar	Requires the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services to develop and provide training to intake workers at homeless shelters focused on how to identify and provide appropriate referrals to those suffering from	Reported and Committed to Senate Finance on 5/7/2019

		mental health issues.	
S4809	Persaud	Relates to the unearned income of a child when the parent or non-parent caregiver chooses to exclude such child from the public assistance household.	Veto memo #164 on 11/25/2019.
S4641	Persaud	Establishes factors and requirements to be considered when a health care practitioner's opinion differs from that of an applicant's treating health care practitioner's opinion as to an applicant's disability.	Veto memo #179 on 12/6/2019
S5402	Persaud	Exempts certain funds in NY ABLE savings accounts from the calculation of household benefits under public assistance programs.	Chapter 329 of 2019 on 10/3/2019.
S5552	Persaud	Relates to the creation of a self-sufficiency standard study regarding how much income is needed for a family of a given composition in a given geographic location to adequately meet its basic needs without public or private assistance.	Reported to Finance: 05/29/2019. Discharged and Committed to Rules: 6/19/2019. Passed Senate: 6/19/2019.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

- February 16, 2019 ***Impact of Timeliness on Youth in Foster Care***
Location: Room 104A, Legislative Office Building, Albany

Sponsored as part of the NYSABPRL 48TH Annual Legislative Conference.
- June 28, 2019 ***Examining the State of our Youth: New York State Foster Care***
Location: 250 Broadway, 19th Floor Hearing Room, Manhattan

Sponsored in conjunction with the Senate Standing Committee on Children & Families and the Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities
- August 16, 2019 ***Examining the State of our Youth: Mental Health Services in Central NY***
Location: 706 N Clinton Street, Syracuse

Sponsored in conjunction with the Senate Standing Committee on Children & Families, the Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities and Senator Rachel May.
- October 21, 2019 ***Assessing Impact of Proposed Federal Changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Official Poverty Measure***
Location: Hearing Room A, Legislative Office Building, Albany

Sponsored in conjunction with Senator Rachel May, Chair, Committee on Aging and Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Chair, Committee on Children & Families.
- October 28, 2019 ***Home Grown: A Round Table Discussion on Youth and the Future of Work in Upstate New York***
Location: SUNY Sullivan, Loch Sheldrake

Sponsored in conjunction with Senator Jen Metzger, Chair, Committee on Agriculture; Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Chair, Committee on Children & Families; Senator David Carlucci, Chair, Committee on Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities; as well as Assemblymembers Ellen Jaffee and Aileen Gunther.
- November 13, 2019 ***Examining the Prevalence of Youth Violence***
Location: Spring Creek Educational Campus, 1065 Elton Street, Brooklyn

Sponsored in conjunction with Senator Luis Sepulveda, Chair, Committee on Crime & Corrections and Senator Jamaal T. Bailey, Chair, Committee on Codes.
- November 26, 2019 ***Public Assistance Income & Resource Limits***
Location: 250 Broadway, 19th Floor Hearing Room, Manhattan

Sponsored in conjunction with Senator David Carlucci, Chair, Senate Standing Committee on Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities.

GUBERNATORIAL NOMINATION

On Tuesday, June 4, 2019, the New York State Senate confirmed the nomination of Michael P. Hein as Commissioner of the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). As part of the process, Committee Chair Roxanne J. Persaud and member Senators reviewed the nomination prior to granting unanimous consent to confirm Commissioner Hein.

Michael P. Hein, Commissioner
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance ((OTDA))

Michael P. Hein was appointed Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in February 2019, by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and confirmed by the Senate in June 2019. He leads a state agency charged with oversight of support programs and economic assistance for low-income New Yorkers. These programs help thousands of households meet basic needs including housing, food and energy related costs. The agency also oversees child support services and makes determinations of medical disability for certain programs. In this role, Commissioner Hein is responsible for providing oversight and guidance to county departments of social services.

Prior to joining OTDA, Commissioner Hein served as Ulster County's first County Executive, taking office in 2009. He developed a strong record of leadership and innovation while building a reputation as a statewide leader in government reform, resulting in his being named one of the top elected officials in America by Governing Magazine.

As County Executive he envisioned and delivered New York's first Restorative Justice and Community Empowerment Center and many other social-justice based initiatives including the construction of a SUNY satellite campus adjacent to an inner-city high school dramatically improving access to higher education. In addition, as a result of his statewide environmental leadership and model sustainability actions, National Geographic Magazine featured Ulster County's environmental achievements in its December 2016 edition.

During his time as County Executive, he led efforts that resulted in functionally ending homelessness among Ulster County's veterans, while coordinating comprehensive support services to greatly improve long-term outcomes for all those in need.

Commissioner Hein came to government service with a background in banking and business. He began his career in public service as Ulster County's Deputy Treasurer and was elevated to County Administrator prior to his election as County Executive.

Commissioner Hein graduated with a B.A. from Eckerd College with a concentration in management. He lives in Hurley with his wife and son.



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