



News from *Assemblyman* **Andrew Hevesi**



Dear Neighbor,

I hope your spring is going well!

As the legislative session enters its final weeks, I wanted to share a few updates on the work my office has been focused on in Albany and across our district.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if either I or my staff can be of any assistance.

All the best, Andy

Andy Hevesi
28th Assembly District

Assemblyman Hevesi is Advancing Legislation for New York's Families

A9333 – Authorizes the use of body imaging scanning equipment in certain facilities for youth and adolescent offenders placed with or committed to the office of children and family services.

According to the Office of Children and Family Services, both State- and locally-operated juvenile justice programs have seen significant increases in incidents of dangerous contraband. Despite staff training on contraband detection; routine searches of staff belongings and areas; youth transport and intake searches; mail checks; visitor entrance screenings; use of wands; metal detectors; and body orifice security scanner (B.O.S.S.) chairs; personal, unit, and room searches; and engaging local law enforcement to assist in contraband detection, dangerous contraband continues to find its way into juvenile justice programs. This dangerous contraband poses a significant risk to both youth and staff safety.

Over the past few years, the population in both detention and placement facilities has significantly increased, with staffing unable to keep pace. The lower staff-to-youth ratios create an increased risk of contraband entering and remaining in facilities undetected. In the same time period, both OCFS and locally-operated programs have seen increases in incidents involving dangerous contraband, including weapons, drugs, and cellular telephones. Some dangerous contraband can only be introduced to a facility if staff facilitate its entry. There have been a number of recent staff arrests at OCFS and locally-operated programs resulting from staff introducing contraband to facilities for youth. Juvenile justice programs are required to maintain the health and safety of facility programs and need to employ a targeted and consistent intervention.

The utilization of radiological searches would assist in reducing the amount of dangerous contraband entering facilities and deter both youth and staff from attempting to introduce it.

Currently, radiological searches must be conducted by a trained medical professional in a medical office and with medical authorization. The issue demands use of a flexible technology with real-time, in-program, immediate impact.

Under current law, only local correctional facilities and DOCCS facilities may use body imaging scanning equipment to screen people for contraband without a medical purpose.

This bill would allow locally operated juvenile detention facilities certified by OCFS and State juvenile justice facilities operated by OCFS to utilize body scanning technology to screen for contraband. This would reduce the need for more invasive physical searches and enhance safety for both staff and youth who are detained or committed. Moreover, advancements to body scanning technology expose individuals to a minimal amount of radiation while still accomplishing contraband detection goals.



This bill passed the Assembly on 3/30/26. Passed Senate on 4/7/26.

A8248 – This bill will authorize the New York City Department of Investigation to have access to certain records related to juveniles for purposes of investigations within its legal authority.

The New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) is the Inspector General of New York City responsible for independently investigating and preventing corruption, fraud, waste, and abuse. In that capacity, DOI is responsible for conducting oversight of New York City Administration for Children's Services' (ACS) operations, including incidents of violence and contraband in the City's juvenile detention centers, contraband trafficking into the centers by center staff, the handling of cases involving the death or serious injury of minor children, problems in the foster care system, and allegations of staff misconduct.



DOI staff include investigators as well as peace officers who can make arrests and participate in the execution of search warrants, and the agency staff work closely with prosecuting offices to develop evidence and charge cases warranting criminal prosecution, issue reports, and make recommendations for policy and procedural reform where appropriate. In order to provide this oversight and conduct robust investigations, DOI regularly requires access to records and information maintained by ACS and the State concerning youth.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) maintains the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment which serves as the central repository for all child abuse and maltreatment reports across the state. Reports made to the register are then referred to the local child protective services, which in New York City is ACS, for investigation and response.

Similarly, the Justice Center maintains the Vulnerable Persons Central Register which serves as the central repository for all reports of abuse, neglect, and significant incidents related to individuals who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect because of their reliance on professional caregivers in state operated, licensed or certified facilities, programs or agencies.

The records maintained in the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment and the Vulnerable Persons Central Register include investigative records, including but not limited to written reports and photographs, final dispositions, names and identifying data, dates and circumstances and other essential information for thorough investigations of abuse and maltreatment of children and vulnerable people, operational and managerial failures, abuse of power, fraud, and corruption.

Under current law, DOI has the authority to access records and information maintained in the registers for purposes of its investigations, but only with prior approval of OCFS or the Justice Center, as applicable, a lengthy and time-intensive process that sometimes results in a denial. Conversely, other law enforcement agencies, like the New York Police Department and the District Attorneys' Offices. Do not need prior approval. Moreover, DOI has no authority to access information about unfounded reports of child abuse or maltreatment.

ACS is also required by State law to maintain records on all juveniles in its detention facilities, including but not limited to the child's name, last known residence, and any further disposition or change in the care of the child. Under current law, these records are confidential, and OCFS requires a lengthy request and approval process before DOI can obtain access to any of these records.

These restrictions hamper DOI's independent investigatory capabilities in two significant ways. First, obtaining prior written OCFS approval can be a burdensome and time-consuming process that must be completed each time DOI needs access to juvenile-related records, and sometimes results in a denial of access. The process unnecessarily delays or prevents DOI's ability to conduct investigations in a timely manner, oftentimes in situations where the health and safety of children are at risk. These delays are particularly harmful where DOI needs immediate access to the juvenile detention facilities to investigate reports of violence or mistreatment or to conduct undercover operations or contraband sweeps.

Second, the inability to access any information about unfounded records means that DOI is wholly unable to investigate certain types of misconduct allegations against ACS employees, such as undue familiarity, or to have a full picture of a family's history with ACS when there is an incident involving the death or serious injury of a child or an allegation of fraud. For example, if ACS investigates and finds a report of child abuse to be unfounded, DOI is unable to review whether the ACS investigation was conducted properly or whether the ACS employees engaged in misconduct during the course of the ACS investigation, or even to confirm the existence of the ACS investigation, because it has no ability to access those records.

This lack of City oversight into the investigations of the reports ACS deems unfounded is dangerous and creates a risk to the City and the children and families that ACS is tasked with protecting. DOI should be treated in a similar manner to other law enforcement agencies and oversight bodies under the law and be granted access to the records it needs to conduct its investigations.

This bill passed out of the Children and Families Committee unanimously on 2/25/26, passed out of the codes committee unanimously on 3/10/26. This bill is currently waiting to be placed on a debate list in order to pass the Assembly before session ends this year.



A9646 – To establish risk plans for voluntary foster care agencies, direct the office of children and family services to establish standards of payment for liability insurance, and to establish the voluntary foster care agency insurance bridge fund.

New York operates a state supervised, county administered, foster care system whereby many of the children and youth in care are placed with private nonprofit Voluntary Foster Care Agencies (VFCAs). VFCAs are required per their contracts with counties to carry certain levels of general liability insurance. However, due to social inflation and increasing pressures in the insurance market, specifically related to foster care, agencies in NYS and nationwide are experiencing significant challenges in accessing liability insurance coverage. There are very few insurance providers in this sector already, and we have very recently begun to see the field get even smaller. This is becoming an increasingly dire issue.

The state must intervene to ensure access to this mandated coverage. Failure to act could lead to nonprofits being forced out of the field, leaving government responsible for the provision of these services. We must learn from the experience in California, where 19 foster care service agencies now can't find coverage since the insurer of 90% of the foster family agencies (FFAs) in the state halted renewals of coverage for all FFAs in the state. This has created a crisis in the sector in California - confusion for foster care parents and youth - and has left the counties struggling to either provide services directly or transfer youth and services other organizations who were able to obtain alternate means of insurance coverage.

There is very limited infrastructure and capacity in NY for counties to directly provide foster care services - VFCAs currently provide more than 75% of foster care services statewide, and 100% in New York City. Without state action to ensure adequate coverage options, children and youth, ultimately in the care and custody of the state, and their families will experience significant disruptions in their care.

Additionally, the current administrative rate set by the state for VFCAs (the Maximum State Aid Rate) must be modified to capture the full scope of the rapidly increasing liability insurance costs and reimburse VFCAs for related expenses in the same fiscal year as they occur. MSAR rates currently use data from two years prior which don't capture these increased costs when providers are experiencing them. Moreover, by including liability insurance costs in a capped general administrative parameter, many of our agencies are experiencing growth in costs that are excluded from rate calculations.

Lastly, the state must provide bridge funding to support VFCAs in addressing liability cost increases that have not yet been captured in their rates, until changes to those calculations moving forward are in place.

This bill has been referred to the Insurance Committee for consideration.

Keeping our Neighborhoods Clean

In its second year of partnership with Assemblyman Hevesi's office, efforts with ACE Programs for the Homeless continue across the district to keep our streets clean.

ACE employs formerly homeless New Yorkers, providing steady employment and job training while employing people directly in our neighborhoods to keep our community maintained.

Through funds Assemblyman Hevesi helped secure in the 2025-26 state budget, ACE crews logged more than 200 hours of work per month in 2025 and removed approximately 9,000 pounds of trash from streets, bus stops, and sidewalks throughout the community.

Assemblyman Hevesi has continued to advocate for funding for this program in the 2026-27 state budget.



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Once again, thank you for your continued partnership in the community, and if you have any thoughts on pending legislation – or if my office can be of assistance on any matter – please do not hesitate to reach out.

Look forward to seeing you out in the community this spring and summer.

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