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February 21, 2020

**VIA E-MAIL**

Hon. Liz Krueger  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
172 State Street, Capitol Building Room 416  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Helene E. Weinstein  
Chair, Assembly Ways and Means Committee  
LOB 923  
Albany, NY 12248

**Re: Budget Testimony**

Dear Sen. Krueger and Asm. Weinstein:

New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms (NYCF) is New York's statewide evangelical Christian advocacy organization. We are writing to submit timely written testimony in regard to the 2020 Joint Budget Hearing on Elementary Education.

Our testimony relates to the cost of fingerprinting and criminal background checks for prospective nonpublic school employees. Bill S.3335-Kaminsky/A.4652-Rozic would require that prospective employees of nonpublic schools submit fingerprints through the State Education Department for the purpose of criminal background checks. At this writing, Bill S.3335-Kaminsky/A.4652-Rozic—which passed the New York State Senate in 2019—has been reported from the Senate Education Committee to the Senate Finance Committee; it has not yet been acted upon by the Assembly Education Committee in 2020. NYCF supports this legislation, which would enhance the safety of students by requiring that criminal background checks be performed on prospective nonpublic school employees. We are, however, concerned about the cost of the proposed fingerprinting. According to the bill memorandum, the cost of such fingerprinting for an applicant whose fingerprints are not already on file with NYSED is \$99 (or \$135 in New York City). New York's hundreds of nonpublic schools, many of which are Christian schools, may not have budgeted funds for the fingerprinting of prospective employees. Furthermore, employees of nonpublic schools typically make significantly lower salaries than employees in similar roles at public schools.

Accordingly, we write to request that the 2020 New York State Budget allow funds from New York's Nonpublic School Safety Equipment (NPSE) Grant to be made available for prospective nonpublic school employee fingerprinting costs. The stated purpose of the NPSE Grant is "to provide religious and independent schools with reimbursement for expenditures related to certain school safety and health expenses." Protecting children from potentially dangerous school employees is a key part of

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school safety, and allowing nonpublic schools the flexibility to use NPSE Grant funding for the fingerprinting of prospective employees would facilitate school safety.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

In His Service,



Rev. Jason J. McGuire  
Executive Director