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ACS COMMISSIONER HANSELL CONDEMNS NEW HOUSE AMENDMENT THAT WOULD DISCRIMINATE AGAINST POTENTIAL LGBTQ FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Today, Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell released a statement in response to the House Appropriations Committee adopting a new amendment that would allow non-profit provider agencies that receive federal funding to deny same-sex couples the opportunity to foster or adopt a child. Moreover, the amendment allows the federal government to withhold approximately 15 percent of a state's federal adoption funding allotment if that state does not comply. Commissioner Hansell today condemned the amendment.

"No matter their sexual orientation, foster and adoptive parents should be applauded for opening their hearts and their homes to some of our most vulnerable children. This bill would deny children the opportunity to be raised in loving, supportive homes and it would unfairly discriminate against LGBTQ people. As Commissioner of one of the largest child welfare agencies in the country, I am urging Congress to make sure this shockingly biased amendment never becomes a reality," **said Commissioner David A. Hansell.**

New York City has one of the most progressive LGBTQ policies within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The Office of Equity Strategies, within the recently created ACS Division of Child and Family Well-Being, has worked to identify strategies to reduce inequities, implicit bias, and other factors that contribute to disparate outcomes for the families and communities that the agency serves. The Office is a national model for how to best work with youth, families, providers, and advocates to build a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Specifically, ACS implemented a comprehensive Non-Discrimination Policy—one of the first in the country. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all qualified prospective foster or adoptive parents who wish to provide homes to children and youth in care have the opportunity to do so without discrimination and to ensure that all children and youth in care are provided with safe, healthy and accepting environments in which to grow and thrive without discrimination. ACS also requires mandatory training for staff, providers, and foster parents; the trainings help translate ACS' LGBTQ policies into everyday practice. These policies are shepherded by the LGBTQ Policy and Practice team, which sits within the Office of Equity Strategies.

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