

## **ASSEMBLY BILL A4353 / SENATE BILL S3186**

Sponsors: Asw. Aura K. Dunn, District 25 (R) and Asm. Ralph R. Caputo, District 28 (D)  
Sen. M. Teresa Ruiz (D)

### **WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?**

This legislation would establish an Office of Ombudsman for Children as an independent office (not housed in the Department of Children and Families) with the power to:

- Ensure that the State is providing effective, appropriate, and timely services for children in foster care or at risk for abuse or neglect in compliance with relevant statutes, rules, regulations, and policies so that children can thrive;
- Report to the governor, legislature, and general public about systemic issues relating to the child welfare system and other services provided to children; and
- Establish and maintain a 24-hour toll-free telephone hotline to receive and respond to calls from members of the public regarding problems without fear of retaliation.

### **WHY NOW?**

A4353/S3186 is timely and essential, as federal oversight of the Division under Charlie and Nadine H. is ending (see: [https://www.childrensrights.org/class\\_action/new-jersey/](https://www.childrensrights.org/class_action/new-jersey/)). It would establish meaningful accountability and oversight at the state level.

### **WHY DO WE SUPPORT THIS BILL?**

#### **A4353/S3186 drives solutions.**

It would help the Department of Children and Families achieve their goal of ensuring that children and their families receive high quality services leading to permanency and stability.

#### **A4353/S3186 increases transparency.**

It would enable sharing of information about individual and systemic issues.

#### **A4353/S3186 provides oversight & accountability.**

It would build confidence in children and families that their concerns will be taken seriously and that gaps in child welfare services will be addressed.

### **HOW CAN I HELP?**

#### **Sign our petition!**

Show your public support for this bill.



<https://www.change.org/Ombudsman4children>

#### **Contact your state representatives!**

Tell them you support this bill.



<https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/district-map>



miriam's heart

Miriam's Heart is a grassroots, New Jersey-based non-profit where children who were adopted or in foster care are celebrated and supported for their strength and resilience. This radical support for adopted and foster youth uplifts children and families at risk. We believe that through a caring community children can thrive and families can be restored.

[www.miriamsheart.org](http://www.miriamsheart.org)

#NJombudsman4kids