

To: Assembly Committee on Children, Families & Food Security: Chairwoman Shama Haider, Vice Chair William Spearman, and Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee,

From: Kathy Collins, Vice Chair of Monmouth ACTS      Date: March 10, 2025

Re: Assembly Bill A4365, the Community Recovery and Family Success Act.

Monmouth ACTS is a public-private entity in Monmouth County which carries out the functions of a Human Services Advisory Council. Eight years ago, Monmouth engaged in a comprehensive Needs Assessment of our County's Human Services, culminating in a re-invention of the way services are now delivered. It brought public officials, County staff, and private providers together in new ways and with new commitments.

We created an integrated leadership and management system, using the Family Success model. Our Human Services Advisory Council became Monmouth ACTS – Assisting Communities Through Services. We now look at the way services can be delivered in a true system of care, rather than in silos responding to distress, disability and dysfunction. We organize around phases of the life span and consider the essential elements of family well-being at each stage of life.

Our successes thus far include:

- A re-organization of our County's Department of Human Service's administration and staff;
- A more powerful private-public partnership which can both sustain progress and confront challenges, like those we have currently.
- Much more frequent and direct connections to residents.

All decisions and actions are guided by the Values we forged early on, which included:

- Consistent resident and community voice is included in every step of the process
- Bending the curve away from crisis response toward support and prevention
- Building systems and responses which promote racial and ethnic equity

Over the years many major changes have been made. For example:

- There is a new contracting process where agencies must show activities reflective of the values of Monmouth ACTS.
- A new Navigation System has a much-publicized Warm-Line, and offers Care Coordination to residents with complicated needs. Agencies now are accountable for more responsive assistance to referred residents.

Because of Monmouth ACTS we have a more realistic and hopeful way to respond as a community to the coming budget challenges.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share our County's transformation, having embraced and employed the Family Success model. I urge that you support this legislation. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Kathy Collins