

TESTIMONY OF TIM CARDEN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES & FOOD SECURITY REGARDING A4365, THE COMMUNITY RECOVERY AND FAMILY SUCCESS ACT

Good morning Madame Chair and Committee Members. I am Tim Carden, Executive Director of the Family Success Institute. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of A4365, the Community Recovery & Family Success Act. And special thanks to the champion and prime sponsor of this bill, Assemblyman Atkins and the nine other Assembly members who have joined him as sponsors. I served in State government in the 1970's and '80's as Cabinet Secretary to the Governor and then as Commissioner of Human Services under Governor Brendan Byrne and it is that formative experience that has drawn me back to support the growing family success movement.

I am proud to be joined here today by members of the FSI Learning Community, a statewide collaborative with over 100 members committed to providing **all** New Jersey families with the resources they need to succeed in life. While many New Jerseyans like myself have been privileged to enjoy the wealth of resources and opportunity that abound in our state, too many families are enduring a very different life course, as evidenced by a widening economic disparity in our state. This legislation will codify the state's commitment to the goal of offering **ALL** families the resources and supports they need to succeed as a right, not a privilege, and reflects the following principles upon which the Family Success movement is built:

First, families are the bedrock of our communities. Providing families the resources needed to succeed will reduce demand for services that treat the results of adverse events and disadvantaged circumstances.

Second, community members and leaders should have authority to direct resources where they are needed. Community based organizations can efficiently provide what families require, identify where opportunity can be realized, and how persistent challenges can be overcome – and direct resources to meet those goals. This legislation will codify a primary role for community representatives in decision making.

Third, little changed from my term in office over 40 years ago, our government resources are largely structured to deliver siloed services designed to mitigate specific conditions of distress. This legislation will support holistic models of service that recognize the compounding effect of different circumstances and conditions. Moreover, this legislation will foster collaboration among different agencies and levels of government, making the resulting programs more effective and efficient. Providing the tools for success rather than treating the effects of adversity is a pillar of Family Success.

Finally, our government alone cannot secure a bright future for every New Jersey family. This bill establishes the framework for collaboration between community, business, government, non-profit and philanthropy to assemble and redirect resources, remove obstacles to wellbeing, and sow the seeds of opportunity in communities across the state. I ask you to vote in favor of A4365 and in doing so commit our state to Investing in Success for **ALL** families .