



New York State
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New York City Commissioner of Child Welfare John Mattingly is correct in criticizing Office of Children and Family Services Commissioner Carrion for acting irresponsibly (“For Juveniles in Family Court, Judges Seek Safer Alternatives to Prison”, March 8). By not acting swiftly to provide a safe, therapeutic environment for young offenders who will inevitably end up being placed away from their homes due to the violent nature of their behavior, she has left family court judges with limited options. Appropriate, nonviolent youths are already being diverted to community-based programs through New York City’s Juvenile Justice Initiative. Private residential programs are not suited to (and often will not accept) these most difficult youths. Meanwhile, the state’s budget includes funding to provide only a fraction of the mental health, substance abuse and other staff necessary to improve the state’s facilities. It is time for Governor Paterson and Commissioner Carrion to finally provide the right treatment in state facilities for these violent youths. The state should not continue to walk away from its responsibility.

Kenneth Brynien
President, NYS Public Employees Federation

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