



S U P P O R T

LEGISLATIVE MEMORANDUM

TO: Assembly Committee on Social Services
FROM: Joshua Terry, Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)
DATE: May 19, 2025
RE: CSEA Support for A. 7833 (Levenberg)

What the bill does: Provides ‘panic buttons’ to social workers who interact with clients in external settings.

Why it matters: Social workers frequently work alone and in high-risk environments, such as at a client’s home, without backup or immediate support. This can lead to dangerous situations, as seen in the tragic case of Maria Coto, a social worker in Peekskill, New York, who was murdered while conducting a home visit in May 2024.

The statistics:

- 70% of front-line child welfare workers have been victims of violence/threats in the line of duty.
- Social service workers in the public sector are 7 times more likely to be victims of violent assaults than the general population.

Key provisions:

- Requires every city or county social services district to provide a panic button to each employee whose job responsibilities necessitate direct interaction with clients in external settings.
- Panic buttons can be wearable, or phone based.
- When pressed, the panic buttons will contact 9-1-1 and provide first responders with the exact location of the employee.

The bottom line: Providing social workers with panic buttons will ensure that they are not left without backup in dangerous situations.

Go deeper: “*Maria Coto, social worker attacked in Peekskill, dies*”



The Civil Service Employees Association strongly supports this proposal.

For additional information, contact:

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