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THE BRIDGE PROJECT

The Bridge Project Celebrates Governor Hochul's Proposal to Establish The Nation's First Statewide Baby Allowance Program

January 14, 2025 – The Bridge Project, the nation's largest direct cash program for mothers and babies, applauds the inclusion of pro-family, pro-affordability proposals in Governor Hochul's State of the State Address. Of particular significance is Governor Hochul's proposal to create the nation's first statewide baby allowance program. Governor Hochul's BABY (Birth Allowance for Beginning Year) Benefit will provide thousands of low-income families with direct cash payments during pregnancy in addition to a \$1,200 baby allowance at the point of birth.

Governor Hochul's proposal is informed by the work of The Bridge Project, which provides over 2,000 families across six states with access to flexible, unconditional cash during the perinatal period. After just one year in the program, 63% of Bridge's program participants living in transitional shelter secured stable housing, 18% pursued post-secondary education, and families experienced a 53% in food security. These findings mirror others domestically and internationally that demonstrate the efficacy of direct cash payments in the perinatal period to improve infant and maternal health, decrease poverty, and increase economic stability.

"We are delighted by Governor Hochul's proposal to provide direct cash payments to low-income mothers during the perinatal period," said **Holly Fogle, Founder and President of The Bridge Project**. "Cash payments during pregnancy can help a mom more easily access necessities like healthy foods, diapers, and formula and purchase big-ticket items like a crib or car seat. Establishing a statewide program to increase financial stability during pregnancy, like as is proposed in the Governor's State of the State, has the potential to stabilize an entire generation of babies in New York and work toward the elimination of child poverty."

"I was honored to attend Governor Hochul's State of the State Address today and celebrate her focus on mothers and babies," said **Daniela Gutierrez, New York City resident and alumni of The Bridge Project**. "This announcement is personal to me: direct cash payments helped me leave an abusive partner, get an apartment of my own, seek out early intervention for my son, and begin to heal. Four years later and with my family thriving, I am now advocating for all moms in New York to receive direct cash payments during and post-pregnancy. The Governor's announcement is a great first step in realizing this goal."

"We have been building the conversation around guaranteed income during pregnancy for two years now in Albany, and I am thrilled to see the Governor announce her support in today's State of the State. This is how we improve maternal health outcomes and set our youngest New

Yorkers up for success from the beginning. I look forward to working with the Governor to win this funding in the budget with the strongest possible proposal,” said **State Senator Jessica Ramos, Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor (13th Senate District, Queens)**.

“Too many children throughout our state live in poverty, including one in two in Rochester. It is our responsibility to ensure that every child has their basic needs met. The Baby Bucks Allowance would allow children to start off on the right foot through direct payments to parents in the earliest stages of their life. We must build on successful programs that have already proven to pull families out of poverty and change the trajectory of a child’s life. I’m proud to carry this legislation in the Assembly and incredibly honored to have the support of so many cosponsors in the legislature. Our community partners throughout the state have been working hard to make this program a reality and I am so happy to see Governor Hochul propose a similar initiative in today’s State of the State address. I look forward to working with the Governor and my colleagues in the legislature to make this program happen for New York families,” said **Assemblywoman Sarah Clark (136th Assembly District, Rochester, Brighton, Irondequoit)**.

“I am encouraged by Governor Hochul’s announcement of the BABY Benefit Program to support low income parents in her State of the State Address. We have been working in the legislature to provide a robust allowance to provide income to mothers in the last three months of pregnancy and first 18 months of their child’s life. Thank you to my colleagues in the legislature, community partners, and Governor Hochul for leading the charge to help New York families,” said **Senator Samra G. Brouk, Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health (55th Senate District)**.

The Governor’s proposal is an encouraging step forward in the fight to establish a broad, generous direct cash program for mothers in New York. The Bridge Project will continue its advocacy for [The Baby Bucks Allowance \(A1597/Senate bill forthcoming, Clark/Ramos\)](#) (formerly the MILC Allowance), a bill to establish direct cash payments for low-income mothers and babies beginning during pregnancy and continuing for 18 months postpartum.

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About The Bridge Project: *The Bridge Project works to end childhood poverty by providing the moms of babies born into poverty in the U.S. with access to flexible cash through a unique combination of direct service, research, and policy influence, reducing the negative effects of poverty immediately and in the long term.*