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YAFFED Responds to Senator Ortt’s Misguided Call to Repeal Substantial Equivalency Regulations

New York, NY — YAFFED (Young Advocates for Fair Education) issued the following statement in response to Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt’s call to repeal the State Education Department’s substantial equivalency regulations in the state budget:

“It is deeply disappointing to see Senator Ortt using inflammatory rhetoric to undermine common-sense regulations designed to ensure that all children in New York—regardless of what type of school they attend—receive a basic education. Let’s be clear: this is not about politics. It’s about children’s futures. The idea that basic literacy and numeracy constitute a ‘radical’ or ‘woke’ agenda is absurd and offensive. These regulations exist to ensure that *every* child, regardless of their background or the school they attend, has the opportunity to succeed in life.

The State Education Department has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that all students in New York—including those in yeshivas—receive the basic education guaranteed to them under state law. The substantial equivalency guidelines were created to uphold students’ rights, not infringe on parental choice. Repealing the substantial equivalency regulations would be a grave disservice to the thousands of children who have for too long been denied basic instruction in English, math, science, and social studies.

We urge lawmakers to reject these cynical efforts to roll back educational protections and allow NYSED to do their job without political interference. The future of New York’s children depends on it.”

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