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## **JUSTGeorgia Coalition Praises Governor's Move To Create Child Welfare Reform Council**

ATLANTA (Thursday, March 13) — Leaders of JUSTGeorgia, a statewide coalition for justice and safety for children, congratulate Gov. Nathan Deal on today's announcement to create the Child Welfare Reform Council.

Gov. Deal today announced the creation of the Council as a major step to improve the state's child welfare system and better protect Georgia's most vulnerable citizens. Modeled after the successful Criminal Justice Reform Council, this council will complete a comprehensive review of the Division of Family and Children Services and advise the governor on possible executive agency reforms and legislative fixes if necessary.

"The 600 members of the JUSTGeorgia coalition stand ready to work with the Council to engage Georgians in a stronger commitment to the success of every child," said Pat Willis, executive director for Voices for Georgia's Children, one of three JUSTGeorgia's lead partners. "Everyone agrees that enhancing the welfare of Georgia's most vulnerable children is our collective responsibility, and the Governor's Council will move us toward improving the safety, living conditions and outcomes of abused and neglected children."

JUSTGeorgia also thanks legislators who have elevated the public conversation about the child welfare system in recent months.

"A timely assessment by an independent council has proven to be a smart move with reforms to Georgia's juvenile justice system, and we're grateful the Governor sees this as the best option here, too," said Sharon Hill, executive director of Georgia Appleseed, one of JUSTGeorgia's lead partners. "With juvenile law reform, we saw first-hand the benefits of a process that built consensus among all stakeholders around best practices."

**About JUSTGeorgia:** *JUSTGeorgia is a statewide coalition of community organizations and individuals committed to bettering the lives of Georgia's children. Founded in 2006, JUSTGeorgia champions laws and services related to juvenile justice and child welfare that are based on best practices to better serve Georgia's children and promote safer communities. The primary goal of JUSTGeorgia is to support a long-term coalition that will advocate, monitor, and report on the conditions, laws, and policies that affect the justice and safety of Georgia's young people. The lead partners that formed JUSTGeorgia are Georgia Appleseed, The Barton Child Law and Policy Center of the Emory University School of Law, and Voices for Georgia's Children. Their efforts were launched by philanthropic funding.*

[www.JUSTGa.org](http://www.JUSTGa.org)

