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For Immediate Release

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**COUNTY BOARD APPROVES
WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS & CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER FEES**

KANKAKEE, IL – Earlier today the Kankakee County Board approved by a unanimous vote two initiatives proposed by the Kankakee County State's Attorneys' Office to address whistleblower protections for Kankakee County employees and strengthen services for child sexual assault victims. These proposals, titled *Adoption of an Ordinance for Whistleblower Protection* and *Amendment to the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Fee* aim to strengthen taxpayer protections and ensure that criminals fund public safety to the fullest extent possible.

The Whistleblower Protection ordinance (Ord.#2017-03-14-1) requires officers and employees of the County to come forward with evidence of fraud in connection with public contracts and misuse of public resources and funds. In addition to mandating reporting, the ordinance also protects employees who report a violation in good faith from retaliation or other adverse employment consequences. "The protection of taxpayer dollars is at the core of accountability; this ordinance protects employees who come forward to report fraud and establishes consequences for those who continue to remain silent in the face of corruption. This is a step in the right direction for Kankakee County and its taxpayers", said State's Attorney Jim Rowe.

Also approved by the Board on Tuesday was a \$10 increase (from \$20 to \$30) in the fee to be paid by defendants following a conviction for a felony or Class A-C misdemeanor. 100% of these funds are allocated to *Child Network*, our local Child Advocacy Center (CAC) that acts as the front-line responder to reports of child sexual abuse, and coordinates the efforts of child protection staff, law enforcement professionals, family advocates, medical experts and mental health clinicians under one roof. The successful prosecution of child molesters and child abusers would not be possible without the tremendous work of *Child Network*. These additional funds, projected to total into the tens of thousands of dollars, will help the CAC deliver these necessary services despite lingering state and local budget issues.

For further information, contact State's Attorney Jim Rowe at (815) 936-5800.

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