



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Gives Final Passage to Bill to Protect Opwdd From Funding Cuts

JACK M. MARTINS June 19, 2013

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The New York State Senate gave final passage to legislation (S4777D), co-sponsored by Senator Jack M. Martins, to protect providers of services for the developmentally disabled from state funding cuts.

The legislation would appropriate up to \$90 million, or as much as is needed, to the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to protect providers from funding reductions if recommended savings measures falls short of projections.

“This was a priority. It was important to protect residents with developmental disabilities and their families from crucial funding cuts to service providers. Our residents deserve nothing less,” said Senator Martins. “I was opposed to these cuts from the beginning and I was glad that we were ultimately all on board with restoring them. I want to thank Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg for his hard work in the Assembly.”

Senate Republicans strongly opposed the proposal in the Governor’s budget for \$240 million in across-the-board funding cuts to OPWDD. The Senate’s budget resolution, passed in March, called for the full restoration of funding for OPWDD.

The final enacted state budget restored \$60 million in state and federal funds to OPWDD. In addition, the budget created a workgroup that identified alternatives to minimize the impact of the cuts. The plan included using funds from Medicaid fraud recoveries, implementing less costly approaches to treatment, and ensuring that Medicaid is the payer of last resort.

Under the legislation passed, should the savings fall short of the amount expected to be achieved from the workgroup, the state would transfer sufficient funds to OPWDD to make up for the shortfall. The Commissioner of OPWDD may also take into account greater

efficiencies which do not diminish or impair services or the quality of care as reflected in the recommendations of the workgroup.

The bill will be sent to the Governor for his consideration.