



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR  
Martin J. Golden

## SENATOR GOLDEN AND COLLEAGUES RECOMMEND \$45 MILLION INCREASE TO SUPPORT FAIR WAGES FOR DIRECT CARE PROFESSIONALS

MARTIN J.GOLDEN March 16, 2017



Brooklyn - Senator Marty Golden (R-C-I) today announced a 2017-18 State Senate budget proposal that provides \$45 million annually to compensate direct care professionals for the important work they do to support individuals with disabilities. The proposal addresses a lack of funding in the Executive Budget to help appropriately adjust salaries at not-for-profits that employ workers who provide state services for individuals with autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and other developmental disabilities.

“The 2017-2017 budget must include sufficient funding to ensure that New York State direct care workers can earn a living wage”, stated Senator Golden. “These men and women perform critical jobs that include bathing, feeding, dressing and serving people with various developmental, physical and mental disabilities. Sadly, many of our direct care workers are forced to work other jobs in order to support and take care of their families. The Governor must adopt a funding plan that allows non-profit groups to retain qualified employees by paying a salary that allows these same workers to meet their financial needs.”

Currently, many direct service professionals (DSPs) earn an average of \$10-\$13 per hour – just above the state’s minimum wage. Last year, the state implemented minimum wage increases that did not provide funding to account for the “compression factor” - the need to increase the salaries for more experienced DSPs and supervisors in order to maintain the current salary gap with minimum wage workers. Without new funding provided to the DSP employers providing services on behalf of the state, the salary gap will compound the existing high turnover rate among those providing these critical services, and lead to significantly increased vacancies as qualified individuals seek less strenuous minimum wage work.

The Senate’s proposal provides \$11.25 million in funding to help implement wage increases in the current year’s budget. Starting in 2017-18, \$45 million would be provided annually to further ensure fair wages for this sector and prevent negative impacts on developmentally disabled services.

The Senate’s one-house budget will be advanced and approved this week, followed by the start of open, public conference committees to iron out differences that exist between the Senate and Assembly plans. A new state budget is scheduled to take effect on April 1.

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