



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ted O'Brien

Senator O'Brien seeks restoration of funding for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities

TED O'BRIEN March 7, 2013

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ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Today, Senator O'Brien stood with local agencies who provide services and support to people with developmental disabilities in calling for the restoration of \$120 million in funding cuts proposed in a recent budget amendment.

"Governor Cuomo has led the way in reforming the budget process and returning stability to Albany. However, as we continue budget negotiations, I believe it is vital that we enable our state's nonprofits to fulfill their essential roles in our communities. I look forward to working with the Governor and legislative leaders to pass a responsible, yet fair, budget," Senator O'Brien said.

Leaders from local organizations that would be affected by the cuts expressed serious concerns about service reductions and the impact they would have on the people they serve.

"Should the proposed cuts stand, New York State will drastically reduce community-based services to our friends, neighbors and family members with developmental disabilities. The wonderfully caring Greater Rochester community has placed a high value on meaningful, inclusive lives for people of all abilities. We look to our elected leaders to join with us and

strongly oppose the proposed six percent reduction to community developmental disability supports and services," said James Branciforte, president of Lifetime Assistance, Inc. and a member of Developmental Disabilities Alliance of Western New York (DDAWNY).

"If this cut is not stopped, not only would it impact our agencies, more importantly it would hit hard the caregivers and the families of the people we serve. It's no secret that we have an aging population and it can be very difficult on older parents and guardians of people with developmental disabilities to help care for their children," added Rhonda Frederick, DDAWNY's chair.

Kevin Judge, whose son Leland is served by Lifetime Assistance, also expressed his concern.

"Leland is non-verbal, has Down syndrome, loves music, is a practical joker and has learned to use his iPod to facilitate his communication needs. But like any other 22-year-old, he deserves every opportunity to live as independently and as inclusively in our community as is possible. These budget cuts will severely impede his ability and the staff at Lifetime's ability to assist him in doing just that," Judge said.

"We have an obligation to balance our state's budget and ensure we get the maximum results for our citizens' tax dollars," O'Brien said. "Guaranteeing adequate funds for services that improve the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities should be a priority, and I will work with my colleagues in government to allocate the necessary resources."

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Sen. O'Brien represents the 55th district in the Senate, which is made up of the eastern half of Monroe County and the western half of Ontario County, including much of the city of Rochester.

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