



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## **Addabbo Co-Sponsors Bill to Fully Restore Cuts to State Programs Serving Developmentally Disabled Children and Adults**

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**Queens, NY, May 13, 2013** -- In an effort to “make state services for some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers whole again,” NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens) is co-sponsoring legislation (**~~S.4777~~/A.6692**) that seeks to restore harmful cuts made to programs for developmentally disabled adults and children in the recently adopted 2013-2014 State Budget.

“While the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) was originally slated for a \$120 million cut in the new budget, I find it reprehensible that we were only able to restore \$30 million for these services – basically chopping \$90 million in state support from some of our most important programs serving some of our most fragile residents,” Addabbo said. “Even worse, when federal matching funds for these services are factored in, these programs for disabled children and adults are actually taking a \$180 million hit. In a State Budget that totals \$135 billion, I find it

pretty hard to believe that we couldn't come up with another \$90 million to avoid decimating human services programs for those most in need."

Under the legislation, up to \$90 million would be provided for the OPWDD, fully restoring the lost support. A special Commissioner's Advisory Panel, as mandated by language included in the state budget, has been working with advocates for the developmentally disabled to propose and implement an action plan to achieve savings in the programs without sacrificing quality of care. But since there is no guarantee that this goal will be satisfactorily achieved, Addabbo and a number of his Senate and Assembly colleagues on both sides of the aisle believe specific legislation is needed to ensure adequate support for OPWDD.

"Without adequate funding, children and adults in need of services will suffer, along with their families," said Addabbo, who voted against the budget bill containing the OPWDD cuts in protest of the reductions. "Programs could close, putting people out of work and depriving developmentally disabled people of support and vital resources. When times are hard, we shouldn't make it even harder for those who struggling every day and who need our help to live up to their highest personal potential."

Addabbo noted that advocates for the developmentally disabled, who visited Albany many times to advocate against the budget cuts, are working hard to address changes in programs brought about by the growth of managed health care plans and to find efficiencies that will not sacrifice the quality of services. In addition, resources must be found to repay the federal government for sizable Medicaid overpayments received by the OPWDD in past years.

"In light of these challenges, and the challenges that our service providers face every day in ensuring needed care for those with developmental disabilities, we should be working with our providers - not against them," said Addabbo. "I'm sure there is room for improvement - there always is - but that doesn't mean we should blindly slash and burn our way to an unwise, unworkable solution. There are better ways, and this legislation will help lead the way."

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