



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cecilia Tkaczyk

Senator Tkaczyk co-Sponsor of Legislation Restoring OPWDD Cuts

CECILIA TKACZYK June 14, 2013

| ISSUE: **DISABILITY**



State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk, Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, praised the agreement to restore funding to the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. She was a co-sponsor of the measure to restore the funds.

“These cuts would have devastated the services that our most vulnerable residents and their families rely on,” Tkaczyk said. “I am proud to have fought for full restoration throughout the budget process, and am thrilled these cuts have finally been restored.”

Senator Tkaczyk joined with advocates for people with developmental disabilities when the cuts were first proposed, in an effort to raise public awareness and opposition to the budget reductions. She held a press conference together with parents, experts and advocates, including Kirk Lewis, Executive Director of Schenectady ARC; Susan Constantino, President & CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State; Barbara Kania, parent of a child with developmental disabilities and Mary Ann Allen, parent of a son on the Autism Spectrum and Executive Director of Wildwood.

Senator Tkaczyk noted that the not-for-profit service providers in the five counties she represents – Albany, Greene, Montgomery, Schenectady and Ulster – serve more than 4,400 individuals with a wide array of disabilities, including Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and other conditions. The agencies in her district would have lost more than \$11.5 million in funding if the originally proposed cuts had not been restored.

The executive budget originally proposed cutting \$120 million, in funding for OPWDD, but \$30 million was restored in the final budget. The recent agreement between the Legislature and the Governor will restore the remaining \$90 million.

The cuts would have been especially harsh because they would have triggered the loss of federal matching funds as well; the \$90 million cut in State funds would have meant the loss of \$180 million to the not-for-profit service providers.