



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

Felder: “We Fought the Good Fight and We Won!”

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Legislation (S4777D) co-sponsored by Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) that protects providers of services for the developmentally disabled from state funding cuts passed the New York State Senate today. The bill was sponsored by Senator Marty Golden (R-C, Brooklyn). 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 fall short of projections.

“We fought the good fight and we won,” said Senator Felder. “We did not back down. We did not take no for an answer. And we delivered for one of our most vulnerable populations. Restoring this funding was unequivocally the right thing to do, and I am extremely proud to have been part of this effort.”

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.

“This bill fulfills our promise to people with developmental disabilities and their families that we would do everything possible to protect them from cuts to service providers that they

depend on every day,” said Senate Majority Coalition Leader Dean Skelos.

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.

“This approach to full restoration is responsible, cost effective and fair to the State and to people with developmental disabilities,” Senator Golden said. “Our programs, our services, and our group homes will be able to continue to serve New Yorkers with special needs, and we owe that to each and every one of them and their families.”

Under the legislation passed today, should the savings fall short of the amount expected to be achieved from the work group, 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 work group.