



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ted O'Brien

## **Senator O'Brien fights to restore OPWDD funding, continues to work with advocates to address future needs**

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**ROCHESTER, N.Y.** - At the end of this year's legislative session, Senator Ted O'Brien worked to restore \$90 million in funding to the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Today, Senator O'Brien joined local experts and advocates to discuss the importance of supporting quality services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and their families.

"As a legislator, one of my most important duties is to protect our state's most vulnerable residents. Thankfully, New York is home to many dedicated nonprofit organizations that serve individuals with developmental disabilities and their families," Senator O'Brien said. "The \$90 million cut initially proposed to these nonprofits would have devastated these organizations, and that is why I fought so hard to restore these essential funds. Now that these funds have been returned, these nonprofits can continue their exceptional efforts protecting the health and quality of life of the many individuals they serve."

Local experts stressed the importance of this funding restoration towards continuing to provide vital care and support to the individuals who need it.

"We applaud Assembly member Weisenberg from Long Island who introduced the bill, Majority Leader Morelle and our entire local Assembly and Senate delegation for supporting the bill that appropriates up to \$90 million for the purpose of funding OPWDD nonprofit services," said Lori VanAuken, Executive Director of Catholic Charities Community Services. "We are especially grateful to Senator O'Brien, who

not only co-sponsored the bill, but who is taking time today to highlight the importance of protecting and helping those who are vulnerable in our communities.”

"We appreciate the Senator's leadership in ensuring the \$90 million restoration that will aid the Arc of Monroe and our developmentally disabled community at large," added Barbara Wale, President of the Arc.

When announcing the restoration of \$90 million in funding for OPWDD, Senator O'Brien was joined by representatives of multiple nonprofit organizations, including:

- Patrick McGrath, Executive Director, Grace Community Services;
- Barbara and Jonathan Jackson of Family Advocates United; and
- Ed Starowicz, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Catholic Charities Community Services

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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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