



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt's Bill to Support People With Disabilities is Signed into Law; First Law for Ortt

ROBERT G. ORTT July 26, 2015

| ISSUE: **MILITARY, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Support People With Disabilities

Proclamation Issued Honoring the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed two pieces of legislation that strengthen the State's support of people with disabilities. The Governor also signed a proclamation, which can be viewed [here](#), marking the 25th anniversary of the historic Americans with Disabilities Act.

“Today, New York is continuing to protect the rights and liberties of people with disabilities,” said Governor Cuomo. “These two pieces of legislation build on our administration’s support for people with disabilities and make New York a better place to live and work for communities across the state. I am proud to honor the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and look forward to furthering the cause of equality for all people.”

The two pieces of legislation signed into law today by the Governor are:

A.136-A/S.1405 – This law codifies protections for people with disabilities who are refused access to places of public accommodation (such as hotels, restaurants, retail stores, recreation or entertainment venues and hospitals). The law clarifies that it is discriminatory for an operator – public or private – to refuse to remove certain architectural or communication barriers in these spaces. It also eliminates an exception for the barrier removal requirement for public libraries.

Senator Carl Marcellino, who sponsored S.1405, said, “Public facilities should be as accessible as possible to all people across our state. This bill represents an important step toward making that goal a reality, and I am pleased to see Governor Cuomo sign it into law. We all share a responsibility to support people with disabilities, and I was proud to sponsor this legislation.”

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, who sponsored A.136-A, said, “In order for public spaces and buildings to truly be open to the public, they must be accessible to all people. This law will ensure that happens in communities throughout New York State. I was proud to fight to get this legislation passed.”

S.5630-A/A.7766-A – This law directs the New York State Office for People with

Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to examine state laws and regulations pertaining to military family members and suggest any necessary improvements to make those laws and regulations better serve the families of people with developmental disabilities. The law also directs OPWDD to study this issue in consultation with the Division of Military and Naval Affairs and the State Education Department.

Senator Rob Ortt, who sponsored S. 5630 and serves as chairman of the New York State Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities said, “It’s only fitting that this bill is signed into law the same day as the 25th anniversary of the ADA law. This legislation shows our members of the Armed Forces that they are not forgotten. It ensures that the state’s laws and programs for people with developmental disabilities are better equipped to support those individuals in military families. This is another small way that we can give back to those who protect and serve our nation, as well as support individuals with developmental disabilities, and I am proud that Governor Cuomo has signed it into law.”

Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, who sponsored A.7766-A, said, “By conducting this review of state laws and studying ways to better support people with developmental disabilities in military families, we can improve the quality of life for people across our state. I believe that this is a very important piece of legislation, and I was proud to work with my partners in government to get it passed. As we mark the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, New York is continuing to become a better and fairer state for all.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act was the world’s first comprehensive law guaranteeing equal rights to people with disabilities, prohibiting discrimination, and promoting accessibility to jobs, schools, transportation, communication and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

Governor Cuomo has made New York a national leader on disability rights by promoting key policies and initiatives including the state's comprehensive [Olmstead Implementation Plan](#) to serve individuals with disabilities in the most integrated settings, [Executive Order 136](#) which established the New York Employment First Initiative to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and creation of the [Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs](#) which protects the safety and civil rights of all New Yorkers.