



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator Gallivan Joins Colleagues in Recommending \$45 Million Increase to Support Direct Care Workers

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) announces Senate Republicans today released a 2017-18 state budget proposal that provides \$45 million annually to compensate direct care professionals for the important work they do to support individuals with disabilities. The proposal addresses a lack of funding in the Executive Budget to help appropriately adjust salaries at not-for-profits that employ workers who provide state services for individuals with autism, serious brain injury, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

"Direct care professionals deserve to be fairly compensated for the crucial services they provide to individuals with developmental disabilities," Gallivan said. "Families rely on these highly trained workers to assist their loved ones on a daily basis and we must do all we can to reduce the high turnover rate within the profession and ensure that adequate staff is in place to provide proper care."

Currently, many direct service professionals (DSPs) earn an average of \$10-\$13 per hour – just above the state's minimum wage. Last year, the state implemented minimum wage increases that did not provide funding to account for the "compression factor" - the need to increase the salaries for more experienced DSPs and supervisors in order to maintain the current salary gap with minimum wage workers. Without new funding provided to the DSP employers providing services on behalf of the state, the salary gap will compound the existing high turnover rate among those providing these critical services, and lead to significantly increased vacancies as qualified individuals seek less strenuous minimum wage work.

The Senate's proposal provides \$11.25 million in funding to help implement wage increases in the current year's budget. Starting in 2017-18, \$45 million would be provided annually to further ensure fair wages for this sector and prevent negative impacts on developmentally disabled services.

The Senate's one-house budget will be advanced and approved this week, followed by the start of open, public conference committees to iron out differences that exist between the Senate and Assembly plans.

A new state budget is scheduled to take effect on April 1.