



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt & Dwyer Program Reps Call on State Legislature to Support Veterans in Budget

ROBERT G. ORTT February 3, 2023

| ISSUE: **NYS BUDGET, JOSEPH DWYER PEER-TO-PEER VETERANS' SUPPORT PROGRAM**



BUFFALO, NY – Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, along with Veterans' One-Stop Center Director of Veteran Integration and PFC Joseph P Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Manager Dan Arnold and Niagara County Veteran Services Coordinator Jeff Glatz today called on the State Legislature to double the funding for the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Support Program in the 2024 State Budget, and to make the funding stream for the program permanent.

“We are standing here with our brothers and sisters who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today in this country to call on my colleagues across the aisle to do what is right for our heroes and not only increase

funding for the Dwyer program, but to make the funding permanent. The Dwyer program provides essential – and at times life-saving – services to veterans in every region of our state. We hear talk all the time in the Legislature about setting priorities. There should be no higher priority than caring for those who put their lives on the line to protect ours, and this budget needs to reflect that reality,” **said Leader Ortt.**

“Whether a Veteran is just returning from a Deployment, separating from service, or has been out for a while but still they have not found their place in their community, they need somewhere or someone where they can feel safe and comfortable. Otherwise, they may turn to those bad vices that make them make bad decisions, or they isolate themselves and fall into depression. We do not want that to happen – there has to be somewhere for them to go and people they are comfortable being around. That is why the PFC Joseph P Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Program is so important,” **said Dan Arnold, Director of Veteran Integration and PFC Joseph P Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Manager.**

“As someone who works with veterans in our community, I’ve seen the impact of the Dwyer Program. The opportunity for a returning veteran to connect with someone that has gone through the very same struggles is an invaluable resource. We must preserve and support this resource at all costs – the men and women who serve our country deserve no less,” **said Jeff Glatz, Niagara County Veterans Services Coordinator.**

The Dwyer Program, first introduced by Senate Republicans in 2012, was established to provide peer-to-peer counseling for veterans suffering from PTSD, TBI or difficulty reintegrating into civilian society. Because there was never a dedicated funding stream made permanent for this vital program, each year the Legislature must include an appropriation to ensure there are funds to keep these critical services running for our veterans who depend on them.

Prior to the release of the Executive Budget earlier this week, Senator Rob Ortt and Senator Jake Ashby penned [a letter](#) to the Governor requesting increased, permanent funding for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support initiative. While the Senate Republicans called for the funding to be doubled, to \$15.4 million, the Executive Budget proposal included only a very insignificant increase in funding, from \$7,700,000 to \$7,715,000.

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