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THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



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March 4, 2013

Senator Dean G. Skelos
Senate Majority Coalition Leader
Legislative Office Building, Room 909
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Leaders Skelos:

The Governor's 30-Day Amendments contain a massive \$240 million (\$120 million state share) reduction in funding for supports and services to people with developmental disabilities. Although these supports and services have jointly been provided by the state and local not-for-profit agencies for over thirty years, the Governor's cuts are only imposed on the voluntary sector.

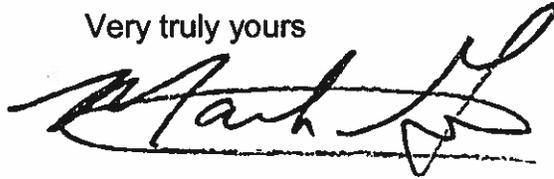
I have been hearing from the parents, families, and individuals with these disabilities who are currently being provided with these supports and services as well as those in critical need of these supports and services as well as many of the 12,500 employees of the agencies providing these supports and services in Western New York and the Finger Lakes that a cut of this magnitude (6% across-the-board) is simply not manageable.

As a result of reductions in funding imposed every year since SFY2008-09, services have already been sharply cut and the proposed cut will force agencies to lay off direct support staff, close or sharply reduce critical programs that people with developmental disabilities and their families count on every day. These cuts can adversely impact on the health and safety and quality of life of some of the most vulnerable among us, individuals who in many cases are unable to effectively advocate for themselves because of the nature of the disabilities and challenges they face and overcome every day. In addition, the cut will impede New York's ability to comply with the Olmstead mandate and the Willowbrook consent decree requiring services to be provided in the most integrated setting.

It is clear from the budget testimony OPWDD senior officials have no plan to address the service disruptions and agency dislocations that will occur if this cut is allowed to go forward. I have been asked to do everything in my power to restore this funding as part of the budget process.

As part of the ongoing budget process, I would urge the Senate to advocate for the use of the resources identified in negotiations with the Assembly and the Governor, including the \$200 million in revenues identified by the Consensus Economic and Revenue Forecast Report, as well as any consensus spending reestimates, rejections of new spending initiatives proposed by the Executive and other available resources, to fully restore this crippling, and in the words of Senate Finance Chair John DeFrancisco, "mindless across-the-board cut" of \$120 million (state share), a reduction in supports and services to our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Very truly yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Grisanti", written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Senator Mark Grisanti

cc: Robert Mujica