

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
New York State Governor
The Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I write today to bring your attention to the devastating impact that proposed cuts to services for people with developmental disabilities will have on families in Western New York and across the state.

If enacted, the proposed cuts to non-profit providers of services for individuals with disabilities will amount to \$240 million. These cuts pose a major threat to our state's most vulnerable citizens. They will jeopardize critical services that individuals with disabilities and their families rely on. We must stop these cuts and restore state aid to protect the people who need our support the most.

Leaders at several non-profit organizations in Western New York have informed me that the proposed cuts could push them into insolvency and force them to close their doors. Without the services they provide, local families would face serious struggles in order to secure adequate care for their loved ones. It's critical that we ensure families have access to not just adequate care, but high-quality care. In addition to diminished access to health care services, people with developmental disabilities will also lose access to educational programs, job training, socialization opportunities and other services. The impact of these cuts will be measured in opportunities lost and hardships endured.

As you know, this problem did not develop overnight. The federal government has indicated that for years the state has overbilled Medicaid for the care and services provided to people with disabilities in the state's developmental centers. In response, the federal government is reducing the Medicaid reimbursement rate by \$1.1 billion this year. I applaud your administration's efforts to negotiate \$600 million in new federal funding for 2013-14 to help address the rate reduction. However, this still leaves a substantial gap.

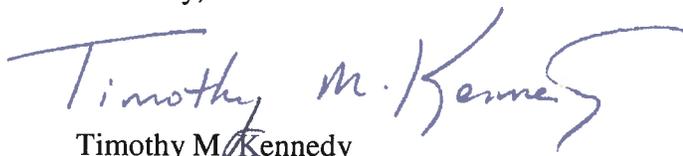
The executive budget proposal suggests filling this gap through a \$120 million cut to the OPWDD budget. This \$120 million cut will fall entirely onto the backs of non-profit

organizations that provide OPWDD services. Unfortunately, this will lead to a federal government match, which means another \$120 million cut. It leaves local non-profit providers scrambling to combat total cuts of \$240 million.

I understand the need for fiscal restraint during this period of economic recovery. However, investing in non-profit providers of OPWDD services and support will reduce long-term costs to the state.

New York State relies heavily on these non-profit organizations to provide care for people with developmental disabilities. We can't turn our backs to them – the care providers and those with disabilities – now. I urge you to reinstate funding for these critical services for our state's most vulnerable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy M. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Timothy M. Kennedy
New York State Senator, 63rd District