

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



CATHARINE M. YOUNG  
SENATOR  
57TH DISTRICT

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December 17, 2018

Honorable Kerry Delaney  
Acting Commissioner  
Office of the Commissioner  
NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities  
44 Holland Avenue  
Albany, New York 12229

Dear Commissioner Delaney:

I am writing to express my concern over the placement of sex offenders with developmental disabilities in group homes throughout New York and to ask that your office immediately take the necessary steps to cease this practice.

A recent study by the Jonathan Carey Foundation cited at least 40 instances of registered sex offenders who were placed in developmentally disabled group homes. This current practice of placement, which I understand is carried out without notice to other group home residents and their families, places other residents and visitors in a potentially dangerous situation where they may be exposed to individuals who have committed serious felonies such as sexual assault or rape. The state has a responsibility to protect these most vulnerable individuals entrusted into OPWDD's care. This practice does not consider the rights of those vulnerable developmentally disabled individuals who reside within the facility and have no choice but to be in daily contact with prior registered sex offenders. Furthermore, developmentally disabled individuals and their families appear to be stripped of their right to have knowledge of their daily proximity to convicted felons.

Additionally, the practice is inconsistent with the need to improve the general acceptance of group homes within a community setting by members of the public. Residents of the surrounding community certainly have the right to know that a facility is housing prior felony sex offenders, so that they may act accordingly.

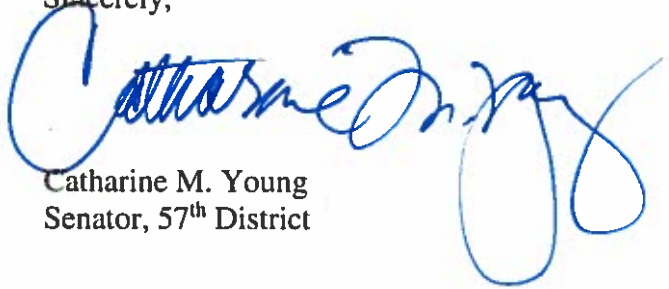
Members of the New York State Senate who passed the enclosed bill share my concerns. S. 3027, by Senator Ranzenhofer, prohibiting the placement of any registered sex offender in a community residence operated by the Office of Mental Health or the Office of Developmental

Disabilities. I fully supported this bill and will be toward its passage in the coming legislative session.

I am asking that you provide detailed information about the number and location of any registered sex offenders currently residing within any OPWDD licensed or operated group home. I am also asking that you immediately cease this placement practice and work to relocate the identified offenders to an appropriate setting.

I am available to discuss this matter at your convenience. I appreciate your kind review and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Catharine M. Young", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Catharine M. Young  
Senator, 57<sup>th</sup> District

CMY/tr  
Enc.