



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patricia Fahy

## Senator Fahy Outlines Priorities as Senate Disabilities Chair Following Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene

PATRICIA FAHY February 5, 2025

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### Senator Fahy's Disability Committee Priorities

**ALBANY, N.Y.** – Senator Patricia Fahy (D—Albany) announced her budgetary priorities as the new Chair of the Senate Disabilities Committee following today's [Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Mental Hygiene](#). More than 3 million New Yorkers, or 1 out of every 5 New Yorkers, are living with a disability, and the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), in partnership with over 400 non-profit providers across the state, oversees and operates a system of support serving over 130,000 people.

"As new Chair of the Senate Disabilities Committee, I'm looking forward to ensuring that New Yorkers living with disabilities and their families receive the support, services, and opportunities they need to thrive," **said Senator Fahy (D—Albany), Chair of the Senate Disabilities Committee.** "Today's budget hearing provided a snapshot of the challenges facing providers serving New Yorkers living with disabilities and needs of the disability community. New York must invest in meaningful wage increases for our direct support professionals and in expanding opportunities for employment by increasing the Workers with Disabilities Tax Credit—both critical steps in addressing workforce shortages, prioritizing jobs for workers

with disabilities, and improving the quality of care for the New Yorkers who depend on these critical services. As negotiations surrounding the final FY2025-26 state budget progress, I look forward to working with my Assembly counterpart, Angelo Santabarbara, and legislative colleagues to craft a budget reflective of the needs of New Yorkers living with disabilities and their families.”

Senator Fahy’s key FY2025-26 priorities:

- 7.8% wage increase for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and human services workers who serve New Yorkers living with disabilities.
- Increase the Workers with Disabilities Tax Credit from \$2,100 to \$5,000 and adjust application processes to expand the number of businesses employing employees with disabilities.
- Invest in an 853 Schools Infrastructure Capital Investment Fund to make investments in capital projects that improve the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of school-age-approved special education schools.
- Create a Human Services Wage Commission to address low wages in the disability services sector and pay inequity between DSPs at nonprofit and state-operated agencies.
- Continuation of a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) for the school year when special education students turn 22 years old.

Together, these investments recognize the importance of investing in the workforce that serves New Yorkers living with disabilities, expanding employment opportunities for workers living with disabilities, and providing critical support for students living with disabilities. Senator Fahy replaces former Disabilities Committee Chair Senator John Mannion, who left the state Senate to join Congress. She has previously been recognized for her advocacy on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities, receiving the New

York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID) Legislative Champion Award in 2019.

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