



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senate Gives Final Passage to Bill to Protect OPWDD from Funding Cuts

CATHARINE YOUNG June 20, 2013

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ALBANY - The New York State Senate recently gave final passage to legislation (S4777D), co-sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean), that would protect providers of services for people with disabilities from devastating state funding cuts.

The legislation would appropriate up to \$90 million, or as much as is needed, to the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to protect providers from funding reductions if recommended savings measures fall short of projections.

“This victory was hard fought, but well worth the battle. We must stand up for the state’s most vulnerable citizens. The Senate was able to restore some of the cuts in the state budget, and remained persistent until these vital organizations could remain fully-funded. Agencies will not be forced to cut or reduce programs that are crucial to people with disabilities,” said Senator Young.

Senate Republicans strongly opposed the proposal in the Governor’s budget for a \$240 million across-the-board funding cut to OPWDD. The Senate’s budget resolution, passed in March, called for the full restoration of funding.

The final enacted state budget restored \$60 million in state and federal funds. In addition, the budget created a workgroup that identified alternatives to minimize the impact of the cuts. The plan included using funds from Medicaid fraud recoveries, implementing less costly approaches to treatment, and ensuring that Medicaid is the payer of last resort, according to Senator Young.

Under the legislation, should the savings fall short of the amount expected to be achieved from the workgroup, the state would transfer sufficient funds to OPWDD to make up for the shortfall. The Commissioner of OPWDD may also take into account greater efficiencies

which do not diminish or impair services or the quality of care as reflected in the recommendations of the workgroup.

The bill will be sent to the Governor for his consideration.