



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Cecilia Tkaczyk

Tkaczyk Measure to Restore Funding for OPWDD Signed by Governor

CECILIA TKACZYK September 30, 2013

| ISSUE: **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



A measure co-sponsored by State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk to restore funding to the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) has been signed by Governor Cuomo.

Senator Tkaczyk, Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, was a vocal opponent of the cuts first proposed in the Executive Budget, saying:

“The budget cuts would have devastated the services that our most vulnerable residents and their families rely on. I am proud to have fought for full restoration throughout the budget process, and am thrilled these cuts have finally been restored,” she said.

Senator Tkaczyk noted the budget cuts would have been especially harsh because they would have triggered the loss of federal matching funds as well; the \$90 million cut in State funds would have meant the loss of \$180 million to the not-for-profit service providers.

Tkaczyk worked to raise public awareness and opposition to the budget cuts when they were first proposed. She held a press conference with advocates, experts and parents, including Kirk Lewis, Executive Director of Schenectady ARC; Susan Constantino, President & CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State; Barbara Kania, parent of a child with developmental disabilities and Mary Ann Allen, parent of a son on the Autism Spectrum and Executive Director of Wildwood.

Senator Tkaczyk noted that the not-for-profit service providers in the five counties she represents – Albany, Greene, Montgomery, Schenectady and Ulster – serve more than 4,400 individuals with a wide array of disabilities, including Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities and other conditions. The agencies in her district would have lost more than \$11.5 million in funding if the originally proposed cuts had not been restored.

The executive budget originally proposed cutting \$120 million, in funding for OPWDD, but \$30 million was restored in the final State budget. The measure signed by the Governor restores the remaining \$90 million.