



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Three More of Ortt's Bills Signed into Law

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| ISSUE: **DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, TRANSPORTATION, FIREFIGHTERS**

Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today announced three bills he introduced earlier this year have been signed into law. Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed legislation (S4523A) that prevents NFTA funds from being diverted, (S5061A) in relation to the North Tonawanda Firemen's Benevolent Association, and lastly (S3638A) that relates to those with Intellectual-Developmental disabilities.

Legislation (S4523A) ensures that money allocated for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority goes directly to the NFTA's general fund rather than being redirected to the state for governmental purposes. These dedicated funds are derived from taxes and fees that help support the NFTA and its subsidiaries. The additional financial assistance will help the NFTA sustain its services.

According to the NFTA, the Metro carries about 94,000 people a day, has 1,119 full time and part-time employees, and utilizes 332 buses, 27 rail cars, 35 vans and four trolley-buses. Decreased ridership, among other factors beyond the NFTA's control, has caused the Authority to operate under many fiscal challenges. The economic decline significantly decreased the NFTA's annual State Transit Operating Assistance (STOA). Meanwhile, other factors have adversely impacted the NFTA, such as rising health care insurance and workers compensation costs, as well as drops in fees collected from mortgage recording taxes.

“This law is the result of a bi-partisan collaboration with my Assembly colleagues,” **said Senator Ortt.** “We recognized the importance of the NFTA needing a reliable funding stream to help tackle its financial and structural challenges. This law guarantees that NFTA revenue will be reinvested in our local infrastructure – to move goods and workers and to attract tourists and jobs – not swept to the state general fund.”

Legislation (S5061A) amends a law written in 1903 for the North Tonawanda Firemen’s Benevolent Association. The amended law removes the \$100 cap that was placed on members of the association for funeral expenses.

Legislation (S3638A) ensures that the state’s public policy of providing support and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities will continue for nonprofits that provide those services under the NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). Some of the services include residential, day and employment services. The measure comes after a plan to transition those with developmental disabilities into managed care, while long-term care services continue to be provided by nonprofits.

All laws are now in effect.