



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt, Croci: “Why is State Paying for Political Activity in Urban Areas?”

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State Senators Rob Ortt and Tom Croci today called on the state Department of Labor to bring questionable politically-charged matters into focus involving the state’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) in New York City.

In a joint letter (attached) sent to Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon on Feb. 15, Senators Ortt and Croci said it was troubling to find out that participants in the program were paid to go door-to-door to register voters in the Borough of the Bronx. The senators questioned and sought more information pertaining to the legality of using taxpayer dollars to fund political activity.

Senator Ortt (R-C-I, North Tonawanda) said, “I strongly support any program that prepares our youth – especially those in underserved communities – for career opportunities. But this type of employment raises serious concerns for me. I find it hard to believe that voter canvassing is the most useful job skill we can be teaching our children. And, I especially believe that taxpayer funds must steer clear of such blatantly political activity.”

The Summer Youth Employment Program provides paid summer employment opportunities to teenagers and young adults in underserved communities across the state. The program helps kids gain skills and hands-on educational experiences for college and career readiness.