



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Senator Larkin Sponsors Bill Allowing Students With Disabilities To Participate In Graduation Ceremonies

WILLIAM LARKIN May 10, 2017



Senator Bill Larkin (R-C-I, Cornwall-On-Hudson) was joined today by Washingtonville School officials, parents and students to discuss a bill that would direct school districts to establish policies and procedures to allow any student with a disability to participate in their high school graduation ceremony and all related activities (S.4729-A).

“The opportunity to walk ceremoniously with a graduating class is an important moment not just for a student but also for his or her family,” said Senator Bill Larkin. “Students with

disabilities who have worked hard to successfully complete four years of high school should not be denied the opportunity to participate in the pomp and circumstance of a graduation ceremony with their peers due to the fact that they will be receiving transitional services.”

Currently in New York State, school districts are not required to allow students with disabilities who will be receiving transitional services and who have not qualified for a regents or local diploma to participate in their graduation ceremony. Under this bill, school districts must adopt a policy to allow students with disabilities who have been issued either a skills and achievement commencement credential or a career development and occupational studies commencement credential to participate in graduation ceremonies and provide annual written notice of such policy to all students with disabilities and their parents or guardians.

“Similar laws have been adopted in several states,” continued Senator Larkin. “It is my sincere hope that New York State will follow suit and address this issue so that hard working disabled students are never denied the right to walk with their peers at graduation.”

Senator Larkin was joined today by Assemblyman James Skoufis who is sponsoring this bill in the Assembly.