



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt to be Honored at Arc National Convention

ROBERT G. ORTT November 1, 2017

| ISSUE: **BFAIR2DIRECTCARE, DIRECT SERVICE PROFESSIONALS, MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

| COMMITTEE: **MENTAL HEALTH**



San Diego, CA – State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I - North Tonawanda) will be recognized by the Arc of the United States this week at the organization’s annual convention in San Diego. Ortt will receive the Catalyst Award for the “Public Policy Victory of the Year” for his work to support direct care professionals serving individuals with disabilities.

State Senator Rob Ortt said: “It’s a true honor to be recognized for my role in what was a tremendous team effort by dedicated individuals, families, and workers in the disability community. We knew that direct care workers not only care for the needs of these vulnerable individuals, but also help them to lead complete lives. And while government can be slow or difficult, what happened here was that through effective communication, advocacy, and education; we were able to take a significant policy goal – funding our hard-working direct care professionals – and turn it into a reality.”

As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, Ortt prioritized direct care and worked with families, advocates, and legislators as part of the bFair2DirectCare campaign. Ortt fought to include the funding in the Senate Republican budget and urged the Governor to recognize the urgency of the issue. The final adopted budget provides a \$146 million multi-year boost in wages to compensate direct care and other clinical professionals for the work they do in caring for others. Ortt noted that the increases will help state-funded non-profits that specialize in the care of vulnerable New Yorkers not only recruit and retain employees, but continue to provide the same level of care that allows them to lead fuller, more independent lives.

The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. They encompass all ages and more than 100 different diagnoses including autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, and various other developmental disabilities. With nearly 700 state and local chapters nationwide, the Arc works with its federation of state and local chapters to create an impressive network of human service agencies ensuring they have the strongest civil rights advocates promoting and protecting their needs at all levels.