



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Helping Raise Mental Health Awareness

ROBERT G. ORTT April 6, 2018

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH, VETERANS, BUDGET**

Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda), Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disability, is highlighting some of the victories achieved in this year's state budget. This year's budget included funding for new childhood mental health initiatives, supportive funding for current crisis intervention teams, and improved peer-to-peer services.

Childhood mental health awareness continues to be a focal point of Sen. Ortt and his committee, and this year, the inclusion of a new school mental health resource training center program further demonstrates his committee's commitment to New York's youth. This budget commits \$1 million to this program per year for the next three years.

"This year especially we're prioritizing mental health education and awareness in our schools across New York State. I know how important educating our youth on the importance of mental health is and these training and resource centers will be a key asset in our approach," said Ortt.

Sen. Ortt and his colleagues were also successful in obtaining \$500,000 for Sources of Strength and Above the Influence training to help fund anti-suicide and anti-drug campaigns for Middle and High Schools across New York.

Finally, Sen. Ortt was proud to obtain over \$3.7 million for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer to Peer Service Program, which helps veterans overcome challenges stemming from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Ortt served as a 1st Lt. in the U.S. Army and is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

“I’ve seen the struggles fellow servicemen and women go through when returning home,” said Sen. Ortt. “I’m thrilled that such a wonderful program will now open its doors in Niagara, Orleans and Monroe counties helping connect and assist those who have sacrificed so much.”

This budget also reallocated funding to allow flexibility for mental health needs.

###