



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Skoufis

## Skoufis Bills Advancing Access for People with Disabilities Passes State Senate

JAMES SKOUFIS May 29, 2019

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**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

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The State Senate passed two bills sponsored by Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) to increase rights and access to services for those who live with physical disabilities.

The first bill, S.1674, creates an office that will function as an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in order to ensure they receive the services and support needed to make informed choices and decisions. There is currently no agency-level office for people with physical disabilities to contact. The second bill, S.1650, will require, upon request, places of public accommodations to enable closed captioning on televisions in public areas.

**Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) said,** "This legislation will touch the lives of and level the playing field for thousands of New Yorkers. Long overdue, we must re-open an agency-level advocacy office for the rights of people with disabilities so that people with physical hardships receive the services and support that enable them to make informed choices. I've long been advocating for this office since my time in the Assembly as it's imperative that these individuals have somewhere in state government to go for assistance. A second bill will

ensure that hearing impaired New Yorkers will be accommodated in public places and, upon request, will receive closed captioned television. I proudly stand with my Senate colleagues in passing this package of legislation that delivers respect and access for people with physical disabilities in our state."

**Doug Hovey, President and CEO of Independent Living Inc. said,** "On behalf of people with disabilities in New York State I am thrilled that Senator Skoufis is sponsoring two very important bills — Closed Captioning in Public Television (S.1650) and creation of an Advocacy Office for People with Disabilities (S.1674) to improve access to communication and provide a voice for people with disabilities in Albany. We applaud him for his commitment to improving the quality of life for all of his constituents, including people with disabilities and members of the aging community."

S.1674 also passed in the Assembly this week. S.1650 will be delivered to the Assembly to await a vote before the end of session. These bills are part of a larger set of disability awareness-related legislation including expanding protecting for individuals with disabilities' bank accounts and making more electronic information accessible.

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