



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daphne Jordan

Senator Daphne Jordan advocates for full funding of the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Veterans Support Program

DAPHNE JORDAN February 3, 2021

| **ISSUE: JOSEPH DWYER PEER-TO-PEER VETERANS' SUPPORT PROGRAM , 2020-21 BUDGET**

Albany, NY – New York State Senator Daphne Jordan (R,C,I-Halfmoon) today advocated for full funding of the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Veterans Support Program as part of the 2021-22 State Budget to ensure the continued delivery of life-saving counseling services and support for America's military veterans.

Senator Jordan also called for the release of 2020-21 Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Veterans Support Program funding to counties administering the initiative. Senator Jordan sent a letter earlier today to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee Chairman John Brooks, urging the restoration and release of funding for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support Program.

Created through the 2012-13 State Budget, the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support Program (aka, the Dwyer Program) is a groundbreaking initiative operating in 23 counties that helps veterans dealing with the invisible wounds of war, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and depression. This proven state program empowers veterans to meet with other veterans in a safe, secure, and

comfortable atmosphere so they may help one another by providing life-saving counseling services and support. Military veterans are much more likely to confer in, and trust, their peers who have endured similar experiences, which is why the Dwyer Program is so effective in providing services and support for veterans.

Governor Cuomo's 2021-22 Executive Budget proposal did not include any funding for the Dwyer Program, meaning that the state legislature will need to restore funding for this important program. Last year's 2020-21 State Budget provided approximately \$4.5 million for the Dwyer Program.

Senator Jordan's letter included the support of the directors (all of whom are military veterans) of the Veterans Service Agencies for Rensselaer County, Saratoga County, and Columbia County: Peter Goebel, Frank McClement, and Gary Flaherty, respectively.

Senator Jordan also called for the release of 2020-21 Dwyer Program funding, and residual 2019-20 funding, to counties administering peer-to-peer support programs. Earlier in January, Senator Jordan joined her Senate Republican colleagues in urging that last year's Dwyer Program funding appropriated through the State Budget be released to counties.

Since 2019, Senator Jordan has advocated for the Dwyer Program, successfully securing \$100,000 for Columbia County, \$145,000 for Rensselaer County, and \$185,000 for Saratoga County, respectively as part of the 2019-20 State Budget and the 2020-21 State Budget. Saratoga County's Peer-to-Peer program, in particular, has been continually recognized for its excellence in helping veterans and serves as a model for the entire state.

"The Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support Program has proven incredibly effective at helping our military veterans and delivering the essential counseling services so

important for our heroes dealing with PTSD, TBI, and depression. The State Budget absolutely must prioritize Dwyer Program funding – and the state legislature should work in a bipartisan fashion to make these funding restorations a reality within the final 2021-22 State Budget. I'll continue advocating for the Dwyer Program and our nation's heroes who have sacrificed everything in service to our country and defense of our freedom," Senator Jordan said.

Text of Senator Jordan's correspondence sent today to Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee Chairman John Brooks urging the full funding of the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support Program in the 2021-22 State Budget, and the release of 2020-21 funding to counties administering peer-to-peer support programs, is attached above with this news release.

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