



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

BILL TO PROTECT STATE-RUN FACILITIES THAT SERVE VULNERABLE NEW YORKERS PASSES SENATE

SUSAN SERINO March 3, 2021

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



HYDE PARK, NY – Senator Sue Serino today announced that bipartisan legislation she cosponsors aimed at saving state-run facilities that provide care for vulnerable New Yorkers has passed in the Senate. The bill, S.1765, would require legislative approval for the closure of certain Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), or Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) facilities.

Under the Governor's current Executive Budget Proposal, a slew of residential facilities are marked for conversion or closure, including the Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center, the only state-run inpatient facility providing psychiatric services for youth in the region and the Red Hook Residential Center located in Dutchess County.

“Even before the pandemic, I was hearing from students and community members about the need for increased access to mental health resources like beds for young people in need of inpatient care, and now, COVID-19 has only exacerbated that need,” said Senator Sue Serino. “Now is not the time for the state to be closing the doors to facilities that offer these much-needed services and provide quality jobs, and the legislature needs to have a clear seat at the table when decisions are made that will impact so many of those we are elected to serve. I’m proud to co-sponsor this bill so that we can ensure the voices of those who rely on these services and the people who are employed by these facilities have a chance to truly be heard.”

This bill comes in response to the proposed expedited closure of these facilities, some of which the Governor proposes to close only ninety days after the budget's passage in his Executive Budget proposal. Specifically, this bill would require the commissioners of the Office of Mental Health, Office for People with Developmental Disabilities and Office of Children and Family Services to submit a full report outlining why any proposed facility closure is necessary. The reports would be sent to the Legislature for consideration and the bill would give the Legislature power to reject the proposed closure.

“Budgets are always about priorities, and we have a duty to ensure that mental healthcare, services for vulnerable New Yorkers, and the good jobs associated with providing them, are high on the state's list of priorities,” Senator Serino continued.

Senator Serino recently joined a bipartisan coalition of Hudson Valley lawmakers to oppose the proposed closure of the Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center. To learn more about these efforts, [click here](#).

Serino also spoke at a recent State Budget Hearing on Human Services about the need to protect the services and jobs provided by the Red Hook Residential Center. To view footage of her exchange with OCFS Commissioner Sheila Poole, [please click here](#).

The bill's prime sponsor is Chair of the Senate's Committee on Disabilities, Senator John Mannion.