



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

Senators Sean Ryan and Tim Kennedy Announce \$3.5 Million In Funding For Upstate Legal Services In The State Budget

SEAN M. RYAN April 16, 2021

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SENATORS SEAN RYAN AND TIM KENNEDY ANNOUNCE \$3.5 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR UPSTATE LEGAL SERVICES IN THE STATE BUDGET

Upstate New York Receives 85% Of New Funding Committed To Civil Legal Services In New York State In FY 2021-2022

BUFFALO – Today, April 16, 2021, New York State Senators Sean Ryan and Tim Kennedy announced that the state budget for FY 2021-2022 includes \$3.5 million in new funding for

civil legal service agencies operating in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany. The funding for upstate agencies makes up 85 percent of the \$4.13 million of new funding for civil legal service providers in the state budget.

This funding will help support local agencies that provide legal services or public safety programs to help low-income families and individuals access basic necessities such as housing, government benefits, employment, and educational services.

Senator Sean Ryan said, “The agencies receiving this funding dedicate extraordinary efforts to providing services that help members of our communities overcome unexpected hardships before they lead to long-term financial burdens. The funding will not only benefit the people who are in need of these services; assisting them will in turn help lessen the lasting effects of the pandemic on our local economy.”

Senator Tim Kennedy said, “These legal services are instrumental in helping so many people facing hardship, and we know that demand for these resources has only been magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we Build Back Better, we need to ensure that we’re doing so with a strong foundation, so that we’re investing in a sustainable future for all New Yorkers. Thank you to the many advocates who fought alongside us to secure this funding. We’re proud to deliver this victory alongside you, and are grateful for your unwavering dedication to our greater community.”

Robert Elardo, Executive Director/CEO, Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project said, “The need is overwhelming. Due to efforts of Senators Ryan and Kennedy, this funding will support our staff and volunteer attorneys fighting to help low-income families maintain the essentials of life.”

Lauren Breen, Executive Director, Neighborhood Legal Services said, “Senators Ryan and Kennedy are visionary leaders and steadfast supporters for WNY civil legal services

agencies. Because of this critical support, Neighborhood Legal Services will be able to increase safety for domestic violence victims, assist people living with disabilities in obtaining modest financial security, and prevent homelessness -- during and after the pandemic.”

Karen Nicolson, CEO, Center for Elder Law & Justice said, “During the last year, when older, poor, and marginalized communities have been most impacted by COVID, access to civil legal services has been needed more than ever before. We are incredibly grateful to Senators Ryan and Kennedy for their leadership in bringing new money to Western New York for vital legal services programs, such as CELJ and our partner agencies. They recognized that prior systemic inequities were only amplified by the crisis and they took bold action on behalf of our community to alleviate those disparities. We look forward to working with them both to continue to address this need.”

Keisha A. Williams, Deputy Executive Director, Western New York Law Center said, “To protect the most vulnerable in our society, unrepresented litigants must have legal representation in cases that affect their basic human needs. This is especially true at this time of crisis. Funding for civil legal services is critical to addressing the enormous challenges of COVID-19 and the various ways it has affected the communities we serve. Western New York Law Center joins our legal services partners in thanking Senators Ryan and Kennedy for their efforts in bringing this funding to Western New York.”

Paul Curtin, Deputy Executive Director, Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo said, “The Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo would like to thank Senator Ryan and Senate leadership for providing much needed funding for civil legal services. This funding will allow our agencies to expand the range and scope of services to the community, as well as strengthen our efforts to collaboratively reduce the gaps in the provision of justice to Western New Yorkers.”

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