



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

## Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick declares victory in fight to save Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK April 6, 2021



Orangetown, NY - Following a months-long effort to save Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center, the center supports the stewardship of public lands, including state parks and millions of acres of public lands throughout the state, Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick declared victory on Tuesday when the state budget for 2021-22 rejected the Governor's proposed closure of Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center (RCPC). The 2021-22 Health & Mental Hygiene budget bill (S2507C), passed the Senate on Tuesday afternoon, without the language that would have allowed the Office of Mental Health to close RCPC. Instead, the center will stay open,

ensuring hundreds of Hudson Valley families can continue to receive inpatient mental health services for their children locally, and saving 130 local unionized jobs.

Senator Reichlin-Melnick led a bipartisan effort over the past two months to oppose the Governor's proposal to close RCPC, organizing press conferences and a petition drive.

State Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said, "For months I have led the effort to save Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center, and I am thrilled our final budget rejects the Governor's misguided proposal to close RCPC. This facility serves some of the neediest children in the Hudson Valley, and I was proud to join my colleagues in government and my friends in labor in a successful effort to keep it open. Now, children from our area can continue to receive services right here in the Hudson Valley, instead of needing to travel to the Bronx, and more than a hundred hard working employees can continue to provide critical services to children in need."

I'm grateful to have had the support of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senate Mental Health Chair Samra Brouk, Assembly Mental Health Chair Aileen Gunther, and so many other colleagues."

**CSEA Southern Region President Anthony Adamo** said, "Keeping RCPC open will make a huge difference for local families facing mental health crises by keeping children closer to home and making it easier for families to stay connected. It's also great news for CSEA members working at RCPC and for the greater Orangetown community. We are grateful to Sen. Elijah Reichlin-Melnick and all of our local Senate and Assembly representatives who have fought tirelessly to keep RCPC open and ensure state-run mental health services remain in the Hudson Valley."

**PEF President Wayne Spence** said, "Governor Cuomo's efforts to close Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center could not have been defeated without the strong support of Senator Reichlin-Melnick, Senator Brouk, Assemblywoman Gunther and the members in both houses. While we remain very concerned about other actions affecting mentally ill New Yorkers enacted as part of this year's state budget, we appreciate the Senator's efforts on this issue and his continued strong support for our members and the quality public services they provide to all New Yorkers."

**Senator Samra Brouk, Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health** said, "At a time where we are seeing an increase in mental health issues for people of all ages, New Yorkers should not be left to face increased hurdles to accessing inpatient care. As the Chair of the Senate Mental Health Committee, I recognize the importance of facilities like Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center, not just for the children and families served by the center, but also the workers who provide vital care to those families. I fought against the proposed closure of RCPC and am proud that we have preserved this essential, valuable service for the region in the enacted New York State budget. The loss of this facility would have created unnecessary hardship for the community and reduced access to mental health services, which is antithetical to the holistic healing New York State needs as we recover from COVID-19."

**Assemblyman Kenneth P. Zebrowski** said, "There is no way we would've let a budget pass that closed Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center. RCPC provides vital services to our most vulnerable children and moving these beds would only exacerbate a growing crisis in our area. I am proud that the Rockland community has come together once again to help save RCPC; ensuring hundreds of families aren't left in the dark and preserving many jobs during this public health crisis."

**Senator James Skoufis** said, "Coming out of the pandemic, it's essential that we develop a budget that prioritizes public health and gets people back to work. The Governor's proposal

to close Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center contradicted both of those goals which makes our successful effort a huge win for Hudson Valley residents. Working with Senator Reichlin-Melnick and Assemblyman Zebrowski, we were able to keep the center open, protect good-paying union jobs, ensure mental health services are here to stay."

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2021-S2507C

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Enacts into law major components of legislation necessary to implement the state health and mental hygiene budget for the 2021-2022 state fiscal year

January 20, 2021

Signed by Governor

Do you support this bill?