

The Legislature of Rockland County



HON. DANA G. STILLEY
Legislator – District 17

Government Operations Committee, Chair
Minority & Women Business Enterprise Committee, Vice-Chair
Budget & Finance Committee
Public Safety Committee

March 15, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We write today as members of the Rockland County Legislature and staunch advocates for individuals with disabilities in Rockland County. We urgently request your support for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) in your proposed budget this year.

The invaluable contributions of DSPs cannot be overstated. They play a crucial role in supporting individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives, promoting independence, and fostering inclusion within our communities. However, despite their dedication and unwavering commitment, DSPs are facing significant challenges due to inadequate compensation and limited resources.

The lack of funding has resulted in stagnant wages for DSPs, making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified staff. High vacancy rates persist within the industry, putting immense strain on service providers like Jawonio, The ARC Rockland, Loeb House Inc., Access: Supports for Living, and Venture Together, all of which are essential pillars of support for individuals with disabilities in Rockland County. Without adequate investment in the DSP workforce, we risk destabilizing the entire support system for individuals with disabilities in our community.

It is imperative that immediate action is taken to address this pressing issue. A permanent investment in DSP salaries is essential to stabilize our workforce and bring DSP wages more in line with the skill and responsibility of their roles. **By committing to a 3.2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and a \$4,000 wage enhancement for DSPs, we can demonstrate our commitment to the well-being of both DSPs and the individuals they support. This is a matter of human dignity, respect, and equity.**

Governor Hochul, we implore you to prioritize the needs of DSPs in your proposed budget this year. Your leadership and advocacy are crucial in ensuring that DSPs receive the recognition and compensation they deserve for their tireless efforts in supporting individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your support and partnership in advancing the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities in Rockland County and across New York State.

Sincerely,

Hon. Dana G. Stille, Sponsor
Legislator, District 17

Hon. Jay Hood, Jr., Chairman
Legislator, District 3

Hon. Aney Paul, Vice-Chair
Legislator, District 14

Hon. Philip Soskin, Second Vice-Chair
Legislator, District 7

Hon. Alden H. Wolfe, Majority Leader
Legislator, District 6

Hon. Joel Friedman, Dep. Majority Leader
Legislator, District 15

Hon. Lon M. Hofstein, Minority Leader
Legislator, District 5

Hon. Douglas J. Johnson, Dep. Min Leader
Legislator, District 1

Hon. Paul C. Cleary
Legislator, District 2

Hon. Itamar J. Yeger
Legislator, District 4

Hon. Toney L. Earl
Legislator, District 8

Hon. Raymond W. Sheridan III
Legislator, District 9

Hon. Beth J. Davidson
Legislator, District 10

Hon. Will J. Kennelly
Legislator, District 11

Hon. Jesse M. Malowitz
Legislator, District 12

Hon. Aron B. Wieder
Legislator, District 13

Hon. Thomas F. Diviny
Legislator, District 16

cc: Hon. William Weber, New York State Senator
Hon. Peter Harckham, New York State Senator
Hon. Kenneth P. Zebrowski, New York State Assembly
Hon. John McGowan, New York State Assembly
Hon. Chris Eachus, New York State Assembly
Hon. Karl Brabenec, New York State Assembly
Laurence O. Toole, Clerk to the Legislature
Mary A. Widmer, Deputy Clerk to the Legislature
Elana Yeger, Senior Legislative Counsel
Ilan Fuchs, Legislative Counsel
Randi Rios-Castro, Chief Executive Officer, Jawonio
Jane Zemon, Chief Executive Officer, The ARC Rockland
Thomas M. Zimmerman, Chief Executive Officer, Loeb House, Inc.
Ronald Colavito, Chief Executive Officer, Access: Supports for Living
Matthew Shelley, Chief Executive Officer, Venture Together

Rockland County Legislature - 11 New Hempstead Road - New City, New York 10956 - Tel: (845) 638-5100

Visit us: <https://legislature.rocklandcountyny.gov/>

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/rockleg>