JAMES N. TEDISCO
Assemblyman 112th District

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November 18, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As you craft the 2016-17 New York State budget, I respectfully request you use part of the proceeds our state will receive from the windfall to help provide the highest level of care for thousands of residents with developmental disabilities by increasing support for the professionals who directly care for them.

I hope you'd agree that the role of state government is to have spending priorities and those should begin with protecting our most vulnerable citizens in the state budget. Currently, our ARCs and those agencies that provide direct care to the developmentally disabled are facing enormous pressure to find qualified employees and pay them competitive wages.

The decision by the state Wage Board to mandate a $15 per hour minimum wage for fast food workers will only turn the current situation into a full-blown crisis for our most vulnerable citizens. In fact, this is already having a chilling effect on the ability of ARCs and related human services agencies to recruit and retain a skilled and talented workforce to care for people with developmental disabilities.

While we appreciate those who work entry level jobs in all sectors, surely looking after the well-being of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities by supporting the compassionate individuals who care for them should be a top priority. In light of recent concerns about the alarming number of reports of alleged abuse brought to the Justice Center, wouldn't we want our state to go above and beyond to ensure we have the highest level of skilled talent available to our loved ones who depend on consistency in their care? To recruit and retain that kind of talent, the state must provide support for those individuals where they will not be tempted to leave for a job elsewhere.

As a state government, we have an obligation to look out for and speak up for all members of our state's family, especially those who in some instances are the silent voices – our developmentally disabled. I respectfully request that the budget you submit to the legislature reflects that priority for our most vulnerable citizens.

Sincerely,

James N. Tedisco

Assemblyman Jim Tedisco
112th Assembly District

Cc. Speaker Carl E. Heastie

DISTRICT OFFICE: 636 Plank Road, Suite 101, Clifton Park, New York 12065 • 518-370-2812, FAX: 518-370-2862
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 404, Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248 • 518-455-5772, FAX: 518-455-4650
EMAIL: tediscoj@assembly.state.ny.us