



NEW YORK
**ALLIANCE FOR
INCLUSION & INNOVATION**

Strength Together

Memorandum in Support S.8184-A (Ortt) and A.10712 (Gunther)

AN ACT to amend part C of chapter 57 of the laws of 2006, relating to establishing a cost of living adjustment for designated human services programs, in relation to the inclusion and development of certain cost of living adjustments and to providing funding to increase salaries and related fringe benefits to direct care workers, direct support professionals and clinical workers including Medicaid Service Coordination

The New York Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation (New York Alliance) supports legislation which provides for a period of four years an additional 3.25% increase to salaries and benefits for direct support professionals in the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) sector and direct care workers in the mental health and alcoholism and substance abuse sectors. The measure, S.8184-A and A.10712 is key to addressing current workforce shortages and providing staff with the earned wage increases along with the recognition of the importance of the work they do each and every day.

The New York Alliance is a statewide association representing 175 not-for-profit provider agencies serving people with disabilities. The New York Alliance envisions a society where people with disabilities are contributing citizens with equal rights and the ability to live full, productive and meaningful lives. The association is the result of ongoing efforts to merge two associations: the New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies and the New York State Rehabilitation Association.

The partnership that exists between government and the not-for-profit sector is critical to the health and well-being of people with disabilities, the staff who support them, the agencies delivering the services and the human services sector as a whole. The stability of the not-for-profit sector relies on appropriate levels of public funding to support the delivery of services including wages for direct support professionals and direct support staff. Wages for these positions have historically been low. As a result, vacancy rates remain at some of the highest levels and staff turnover is ongoing. Achieving a living wage is paramount to the health of the system and the promotion of the direct support profession. The legislation ensures that direct support professionals and direct care workers receive the deserved \$3.25 wage increases over a period of four years which continues the necessary path to attain a living wage.

The New York Alliance strongly supports S.8184-A and A.10712 and urges the State Legislature to pass this important measure.

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Issued: May 31, 2018



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