



JACOB C. ASHBY
Assemblyman 107th District

PLEASE REPLY TO
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THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
Aging
Veterans' Affairs
COMMITTEES
Health
Higher Education
Tourism, Parks, Arts and
Sports Development

January 15, 2021

Hon. Carl Heastie
Speaker, New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Aileen M. Gunther
Chair, Assembly Committee on Mental Health
Legislative Office Building, Room 826
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Didi Barrett
Chair, Assembly Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Legislative Office Building, Room 841
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie, Chairwomen Gunther and Barrett:

We write to request that the Majority Conference immediately release all available funding for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support Program. As you are aware, more than \$4.5 million was allocated in the 2020-2021 Enacted Budget for this critical initiative.

Continuing to delay the distribution of these resources threatens one of the most relied-upon and successful programs serving New York's veterans. We hope you agree, after all they have given to us, our veteran community deserves all the care, attention and assistance we can provide.

The financial impacts of COVID-19 on our state have been devastating. While we appreciate the need for prudent spending during these times, the pandemic has also taken a severe toll on individuals struggling with mental illness or post-traumatic stress. Veterans involved in the Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Program depend greatly on these critical services for their personal health and well-being, employment and housing assistance, and necessary recovery.

Last year members of the Assembly Minority Conference toured the state and talked to veterans about looming budget and program cuts, and the impacts such actions would have on critical services. Through collaborative efforts, millions in proposed cuts to the Joseph P. Dwyer Program were restored in the final Enacted Budget.

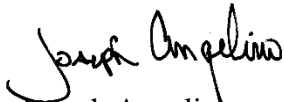
As public officials, we have a responsibility to honor the commitment we made to the brave men and women who have given so much of themselves to cause and country. State funding has been approved and set aside for this incredible program. Our veterans have kept us safe – it's time we keep our word.

Thank you for your consideration. God bless America.

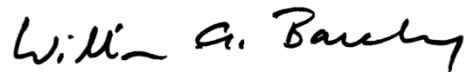
Sincerely,



Jacob Ashby
107th Assembly District



Joseph Angelino
122nd Assembly District



Will Barclay
Assembly Minority Leader



Kenneth D. Blankenbush
117th Assembly District



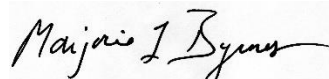
Karl Brabenec
98th Assembly District



Keith P. Brown
12th Assembly District



Kevin M. Byrne
94th Assembly District



Marjorie L. Byrnes
133rd Assembly District



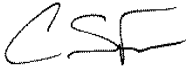
Joseph P. DeStefano
3rd Assembly District



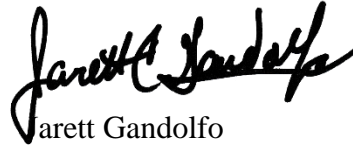
Michael Durso
9th Assembly District



Michael J. Fitzpatrick
8th Assembly District



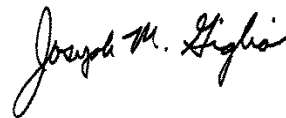
Christopher S. Friend
124th Assembly District



Jarett Gandolfo
7th Assembly District



Jodi Giglio
2nd Assembly District



Joseph Giglio
148th Assembly District



Andrew Goodell
150th Assembly District



Stephen M. Hawley
139th Assembly District



Joshua Jensen
134th Assembly District



Kieran Michael Lalor
105th Assembly District



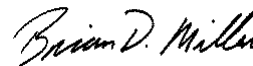
Brian Manktelow
130th Assembly District



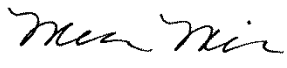
David G. McDonough
14th Assembly District





John Mikulin
17th Assembly District




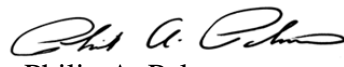
Brian D. Miller
101st Assembly District



Melissa "Missy" Miller
20th Assembly District



Michael A. Montesano
15th Assembly District

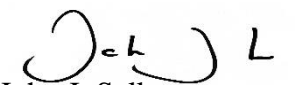

Angelo J. Morinello
145th Assembly District



Michael J. Norris
144th Assembly District

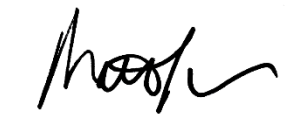

Philip A. Palmesano
132nd Assembly District



Edward P. Ra
19th Assembly District



Michael W. Reilly, Jr.
62nd Assembly District



John J. Salka
121st Assembly District

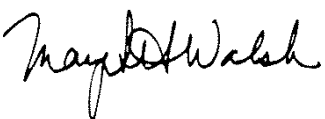

Colin J. Schmitt
99th Assembly District


Matthew Simpson
114th Assembly District


Douglas M. Smith
5th Assembly District


Christopher Tague
102nd Assembly District


Mark Walczyk
116th Assembly District


Mary Beth Walsh
112th Assembly District